

SEPTEMBER 16, 1921

No. 833

FAME
AND

7 Cents

FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

THE RACE FOR GOLD OR AFTER AN AZTEC TREASURE

AND OTHER STORIES

By A Self-Made Man



He put down the pot, and was about to go to his companion's assistance, when half a dozen more peons rushed upon him. The odds were too great for him to face, so he turned and fled down the steps.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

Issued Weekly—Subscription price, \$3.50 per year; Canada, \$4.00; Foreign, \$4.50. Harry E. Wolff, Publisher, 161 West 23d Street, New York, N. Y. Entered as Second-Class Matter, October 4, 1911, at the Post-Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 16, 1921.

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The Race For Gold

OR, AFTER AN AZTEC TREASURE

BY A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—A Blow With the Naked Fist.

"What are we going to do now, fellows?" said Sam Colton. "The office has gone up in smoke, and here we are—stranded down in Yucatan, with very little money in our clothes."

"Do!" replied Phil Sketchley, with a sickly grin. "What can we do, but work our way back to the States the best way we can. We were fools to come down here."

"That's what we were," growled Jim Bunce, a sour-looking chap, who was Phil's particular friend.

"What's the use of feeling down in the mouth? That won't make things run any smoother," said Jack Russell, a good-looking, curly-headed lad, who appeared to be the least cast down of the party. "All that worries me just now is the heat. It's hotter than Africa to-day. Here, Senorita," he added, in Spanish, to a pretty attendant, "another bottle of that sweet cordial, please."

"Si, senor," replied the girl, with a curtsy and a coquettish look at Jack, who had attracted her fancy, "I will bring it at once."

"See here, senorita, fetch me a package of cigarettes," put in Phil, with a smirk intended to impress the girl with his importance.

The attendant made no answer and walked off. The four American boys were seated at a table in a wine shop which was practically open on three sides to admit the breezes. Houses had to be open in that climate, which was of a tropical intensity, for the town of Progreso, spread out in the foreground, on the seacoast, was just below the 20th parallel.

Four months or so previous to the opening of our story the four boys, then strangers to each other, had answered an advertisement in a New York newspaper for clerks to go to Yucatan at a tempting salary. Some knowledge of the Spanish language was one of the essentials required in the applicants, and perhaps a dozen young fellows sought the jobs. The four we have just introduced to the reader were selected, and shipped, passage paid, to the exporting house of Guzman & Co., Progreso. When they arrived they were provided with lodgings in a house close to the office and store of the firm, and put to work. There they had been ever since, but the tempting wages had been paid to them in such small instalments that a considerable balance was now owing them.

They held several pow-wows on the subject, at

which they expressed their dissatisfaction with the state of things, but could see no way of improving conditions. Matters were growing acute with them when the night before the afternoon we bring them before the reader, the establishment where they put in their valuable services unaccountably caught fire in two or three places, and all the efforts of Progreso firemen failed to prevent its reduction to ashes, with two or three of the adjoining houses. Senor Guzman and his partner were early on the grounds, viewing the ruins of their place of business.

They tore their hair and declared themselves ruined. As Jack Russell knew the firm was heavily insured in a British fire insurance company, he could not see how the partners could be ruined. At length Senor Guzman called his four American clerks together and told them that their services would not be required until affairs were adjusted. When Jack suggested a payment on account of what was due them to tide them over the time, the Senor said he was sorry, but he and his partner really had no money to dispense. With that he walked away and the four clerks looked at one another in some dismay. They walked away, too, and finally came to anchor at the wine house.

"Say," said Sam, "it's mighty funny how the store caught fire in several places. If such a thing happened in New York, the firemen would take it as a fact that somebody set fire to the place."

"What do you think about it?" said Jack.

"I think there isn't any doubt that the place was set on fire."

"By whom?"

"How can I tell? I wasn't there when the fire started."

"Guzman & Co. are heavily insured in the North Bristol & Birmingham Assurance Co., of London."

"Then they won't lose anything."

"Not a whole lot, if the insurance company pays up."

"And they told us they were ruined," Jack said.

"Ruined!" sneered Phil. "Do you suppose Jim and me believed that? They were throwing a bluff. If that fire was investigated, I'll bet it would be found that Guzman hired somebody to touch it off."

Bunce grinned.

"Well, it's none of our business," said Jack.

"What I'm interested in is the money question. We've got to have some dough to pull us through till the store starts up again, or else we've got to look for other jobs. We can't live on air."

At that moment the senorita came along with a bottle of the light cordial the boys had been drinking, a popular sweet wine of the country made of pure grape juice, and two packages of cigarettes. She laid the former before Jack and handed Phil and Jim the smokes.

"Thanks, senorita," said Jack. "You're a pretty girl."

"The senor is complimentary," said the girl, with a smile and a blush.

The reader will understand that when the boys talked with a native of the country they used Spanish, but among themselves they spoke English.

"Oh, no! I'm only telling the truth," said Jack, uncorking the bottle with his fingers and pouring some of the wine in Sam's glass.

"You are a flatterer, senor," said the senorita, evidently pleased with the compliment Jack had bestowed upon her.

The girl was then called by the proprietor to wait on a couple of customers who had just entered and seated themselves at a near-by table. One of them was flashily attired in the costume of the country—that is, he wore a white suit, with a bright-colored scarf about his waist, a fancy shirt underneath his open jacket, cut low in the neck, and a sort of sombrero on his head. His skin was swarthy, his eyes, not pleasant ones, as black as a sloe, while he wore a couple of rings on his fingers. His companion was dressed more coarsely, and looked like a hard nut.

They were smoking cigarettes, and they ordered a stronger liquor than that set before the boys. The senorita waited on them. The smartly dressed fellow said something to her which brought a flush to her face, and she hurried away to fill their orders. Jack had noticed the incident, but thought nothing of it, for he knew that the natives were more or less free in their ways.

"Jim," said Phil, "let's go call on Guzman and touch him for a roll."

"I'm on," grinned Jim.

"I wish you chaps luck, but I doubt if you get anything. You heard what he said to us at the ruins."

"You needn't worry about us," said Phil sourly. "If Guzman doesn't come down, there'll be something doing."

"You bet there will," said Jim, with a swagger, as he got up.

At that juncture the senorita brought the liquor to the newcomers.

"Those cherry lips of yours are so tempting I must have a kiss, Pepita," said the black-eyed man, seizing the girl around the waist and pulling her close to him.

The girl dropped the tray with a crash and uttered a scream.

"Aha! Struggle away, my dear. I have you cornered. I shall take more than one kiss because you resist me. Now!"

Another scream and then the girl suddenly held her disengaged arm toward Jack.

"Oh, senor, help me!" she cried appealingly.

Her appeal was not made in vain. Jack sprang

on his feet with indignant, flashing eyes, and strode over to the other table.

"Release her, senor," he said, in a resolute tone.

"Caramba! Who are you?" replied the man fiercely.

"An American, and this young lady has appealed to me for protection."

"Por Dios! You talk to me that way!" roared the fellow furiously. "I will fix you; but first I will have the kisses and then I will settle with you."

He forcibly bent the girl's head down. Then something happened. Quick as a flash Jack struck the man a heavy blow in the jaw that rattled every tooth in his head and tore the girl from his grasp.

CHAPTER II.—An American Cyclone.

The action of Jack Russell created a great sensation in the wine house. In a moment every customer was on his feet. Phil Sketchley and Jim Bunce, foreseeing trouble, sneaked to the entrance and got ready to run, like the cowards they were. Sam Colton, on the contrary, stuck by his friend. The hard-looking companion of the man who had been struck uttered an imprecation, started up, and drew a knife.

"Sit down," said Sam, pushing him back. "This isn't your quarrel."

"Caramba! You, too!" cried the man, lunging at Sam with his knife; but the boy grabbed him by the wrist and by the throat, and held him back in his chair.

The other man sat dazed for a few moments from the effects of the blow, then he started up with a furious oath and flashed out his knife. With blood in his eye he jumped for Jack. As Jack sprang back, Pepita, with a scream, threw herself in front of him, and caught at the rascal's hand with both of hers. The blade of the knife reached her breast and scratched her skin. The sight made Jack wild. He sprang at the man like a wildcat and smashed him in the face with his right and then his left in rapid succession. Then he rained blows upon his jaws so fast and furious that the fellow went down on the floor completely knocked out. Jack tore the knife from his fingers and then grabbed the girl.

"You are wounded," he said.

"It's nothing," she said faintly, white as chalk.

"Landlord, some brandy—quick, and then get a doctor! Stir yourself or by creation I'll clear out the house!" cried Jack.

The landlord jumped in a hurry to execute his command, while the spectators looked at the boy in blended fear and admiration. Pepita laid her head on Jack's shoulder, and closed her eyes. She felt happy to feel his arms about her. As for Sam, the crowd considered him of the same caliber as Jack. He held the other rascal in a grip of steel, and the fellow struggled in vain to use his knife. Pierre brought the brandy to Jack, who put the glass to the girl's lips.

"Drink a little, Pepita," he said. "It will revive you."

She obeyed quite docilely, and then bent an indescribable look at the boy.

"Ah! Senor Jack, I have saved your life, and if I die——"

"You shan't die, sweet one, if I can help it. There is a woman about the house, is there not?"

"Si—Madame Catel."

"My wife—a charming woman, senor," said Pierre, with a smirk.

"Well, go and fetch her! Don't stand there like a grinning monkey. Go!"

"Certainly," said the Frenchman, hustling away.

He returned in a few moments with a stout, dark-featured woman who might have been charming when she was young, but had left the greater part of her good looks somewhere along life's highway.

"What is this?" she cried, in shrill tones. "Pepita wounded! How did it happen?"

"You can ask her later. She needs your care now. See, here is the wound," and Jack pointed to the stained spot.

"Come, girl," said the French woman. "You can walk, can't you?"

"Yes, madame," replied Pepita faintly.

"I will support you," said the boy, seeing that the proprietor's wife did not offer to do so.

Pepita, with a faint smile, laid her head again on Jack's shoulder and let him lead her across the room. In the meanwhile the other chap had dropped his knife at Sam's command, and the boy took possession of it. No one up to this point had offered to help the unconscious rascal. All knew him, the boys excepted, as Sanchez Pinto, a man suspected of being in league with a notorious band of robbers that infested a nearby mountain range, and made life strenuous for the country folks, and travelers generally.

His companion was not so well known, but Pierre was not ignorant of his name, which was Bruno Villanos. Bruno, after being released by Sam, raised Pinto on a chair, and poured some of the liquor from the bottle which had not been broken by its fall, down his throat. That revived him.

"Where am I, Bruno?" he said, in a dazed tone.

"Here, in the wineshop of Pierre Catel."

"Ha! I remember," said Pinto, starting up and glaring around. "Where is that young wildcat? I will kill him!"

"He has gone away with the girl and Madame Catel. You wounded the senorita."

"Caramba! I did not mean to do it. She jumped in the way, the little fool. But for her, I would have finished the boy. But I will fix him yet. He struck me savagely, and only his blood can wipe out the blows."

The excitement having calmed down the other customers had resumed their seats, and in low tones talked admiringly of the prowess of the two boys—particularly that of Jack, who dared to tackle such a man as Sanchez Pinto. Phil and Jim did not return, but walked off to find Senor Guzman. While they were proceeding on their way, Jack, after seeing that Pepita would be properly attended to by Madame Catel, rejoined Sam. He was prepared for more trouble, but it didn't come then. Pinto and Bruno, having finished their liquor, had paid their score and departed, leaving the two boys masters of the situation and in possession of their knives,

which were the only weapons they had carried on their persons.

"Where are those rascals?" asked Jack.

"Gone," replied Sam.

"I'm glad to hear it. Pepita told me their names, and that they haven't the best reputation in Progreso. She made me promise to be careful of myself, which of course I intend to be, anyhow, for life still has a sugary attraction for me."

"Well, let's be going. I don't see Bunce or Sketchley around. I guess they took a sneak when the row began."

"Leaving us to fight it out. We might expect that of them. They've never been friends of ours."

"They ought to have dropped any private feeling and stood by us. We wouldn't desert them in an emergency."

"Oh, they're small potatoes. If you had to depend on them you'd get left every time."

"I believe you. They're tarred with the same brush. If you hadn't been one of the bunch sent down here I'd have had a lonesome time of it, for I never could cotton to such chaps as Bunce and Sketchley."

By this time the boys had reached their lodgings, and where they boarded, as well, and went to the room occupied by both.

CHAPTER III.—Phil and Jim in Luck Financially.

Jack and Sam were eating supper and wondering where Phil and Jim were, when those lads entered the room with a swagger, as if they owned the place. They favored Jack and Sam with malicious grins.

"Been calling on Senor Guzman?" asked Jack.

"I should smile," returned Bunce complacently.

At that moment the boss of the house entered the room with the first-course for the late comers.

"What do you call this stuff?" said Phil, with the air of a grand duke.

"Soup, senor. It is very fine this evening."

"Soup! I call it dish water."

The man's eyes snapped in a displeased way.

"You have never found fault with it before," he said.

"It never was so rotten before."

"The senors do not care for the soup?" said the man.

"No; the senors are not indulging in liquid nourishment this evening," said Bunce, mimicking the man's tones. "We want something more substantial."

"Fetch them some roasted shark, with sauce a la Progreso," said Sam, grinning.

"Go chase yourself!" growled Bunce.

The landlord took the soup away, saying he would bring on the meat course.

"How did you chaps make out with Guzman?" asked Jack. "Did you see him?"

"Did we see him?" replied Bunce. "I should whisper. How did we make out, Phil?"

Instead of replying in words, Sketchley shoved his hand in his pockets, pulled something out, and putting both his hands together, began to

shake them, which performance produced a chinking of coin.

"How does that hit you two guys?" he said.

"You got some money out of him?" said Jack, in surprise.

"Did we get some money out of him, Jim, or didn't we?" said Sketchley.

"I cannot tell a lie," grinned Bunce. "We did. Feast your eyes on that," and the speaker dropped a handful of English sovereigns on his plate.

"And feast your eyes on this," said Sketchley, producing another handful.

Each showed at least twenty of the goldpieces, thereby proving themselves to be worth \$100 apiece. To say that Jack and Sam were astonished would be putting it mildly.

"You never got that from Senor Guzman," said Jack. "What have you been doing—robbing a bank?"

The approaching footsteps of the boarding house keeper caused Phil and Jim to hustle the money into their pockets.

"We got it from Guzman," said Sketchley. "Twenty pounds sterling apiece, or one hundred plunks in American money. When it's gone all we have to do will be to pull his leg for more, and another twenty pounds will come our way. And when that is gone, another twenty pounds, and so on indefinitely. How does it strike you?"

"It strikes me that you are lying," said Jack bluntly.

Phil and Jim looked at each other and burst out laughing. They were too tickled to take offense at Russell's plain words.

"We are the people, aren't we, Jim?" said Phil.

"We certainly are," coincided his companion.

"You fellows seem to be tickled over something," said Jack. "I suppose it's the possession of all that money. You are laughing at Sam and me because we haven't got our shares yet."

"You're wrong. We're laughing at something else, ain't we, Jim?"

Jim nodded and went on eating, as the landlord had brought in the meat. After the meal the four boys left the house, Phil and Jim going off by themselves.

"I don't see how those fellows got so much money out of Guzman," said Sam.

"Neither do I. Both partners positively refused to give us a cent at the ruins this morning."

"I wonder what Phil meant by saying he and Jim had a special graft?"

"I couldn't tell you. It's my opinion he was joshing us. Guzman did not think half as much of those chaps as he did of you and me. He made me his chief bookkeeper, though he didn't offer to pay me any more wages. He told me several times that when the firm got its money he would raise me."

"If he thinks so much of you, I should imagine he'd pay you quicker than Jim and Phil."

"We'll both strike him in the morning. We need the coin badly enough."

They turned in early, but Phil and Bunce did not return to their room till quite late, and were still asleep when Jack and Sam went to breakfast. After the meal the two boys started for the Guzman villa. The senior partner was at

breakfast with his family and received the boys in the room. Jack, acting as spokesman, told him the object of their visit.

"I told you yesterday that the firm had no money to give out," said Guzman, looking nervous.

"I know you did, but Sketchley and Bunce showed us twenty sovereigns each last night, and told us they got them from you."

"They didn't get any money from me."

"Then I don't know where they could have got it," said Jack.

Guzman shrugged his shoulders and looked relieved.

"Well, you can let us have a couple of sovereigns, can't you? We have got to pay for our room and board to-morrow."

Guzman produced two goldpieces and gave each of them one.

"Do you know any place where we would be likely to get work till you started up business again?" asked Jack.

Guzman thought a moment.

"I have a friend who has a plantation fifteen miles out on the Bastia road. I will give you a note to him. He'll give you both something to do till we want you again. It will be a good place for you to go, for you'll get your board and lodging for nothing."

"Thanks," said Jack.

Guzman sent one of his children for a portable writing desk and wrote the note to his friend, Manuel Cabrillo. The boys then took their leave.

"It's clear as noonday that Phil and Jim lied to us. They must have found that gold somewhere. Probably they picked up a purse on the street," said Jack.

"I wish we could find one, too," said Sam.

"Are you willing to go to work on that plantation, Sam?" asked Jack.

"Sure. I'm ready to go anywhere you do," said Sam.

They hired a couple of donkeys and started. The Frenchman's wine house was on the Bastia road, and the boys stopped there, as Jack wanted to learn how Pepita was getting on. He found her on duty as usual.

"Ah, Senor Jack, how glad I am to see you!" she cried, rushing over to Jack.

He took her hands and looked into her blushing face.

"I am glad to see you around at your work, Pepita. That shows your wound was not serious," said Jack. "You might have lost your life in your effort to save me. I am very grateful to you, Pepita, and you may consider me your friend for life."

"Ah, Senor Jack, you make me very happy!" she said, blushing. "I have no friend but you. You must come and see me often. If you do not, I shall be unhappy."

"I wouldn't make you unhappy for the world, Pepita," said Jack, taking her pretty face in his two hands.

She flashed such a look in his face, and then dropped her long, sweeping eyelashes that Jack couldn't resist the temptation of kissing her.

"Oh, Senor Jack!" she murmured, blushing like a red rose.

Then Jack put his arms around her and drew her close to him. She dropped her head on his

shoulder, whereupon Jack kissed her again, twice in succession. They sat down at the table in the retired corner where they had been standing half hidden by the flowers that grew up one side of the shop, and Jack told her how he had come to Progreso to work for Guzman & Co., some four months since, and how the store had been burned down two nights before, and he, with the rest of the force, was out of work for the present.

"I'm now going with my friend Sam, to the plantation of Senor Cabrillo, on this road, about fifteen miles from here, to get work until Senor Guzman sends for us," said Jack.

Jack then bade Pepita good-by and he and Sam continued on the way, with a warning from the girl to be careful of themselves, as the mountain bandits occasionally haunted the road and held up travelers.

CHAPTER IV.—The Treasure Note.

The donkeys jogged along at an easy pace, and Jack and Sam had every opportunity to leisurely survey the country around them. They had never been out on the Bastia road before, because they had had an idea that the country was dull and uninteresting. They found it quite the contrary. The farther they proceeded, the larger the plantations became, and as a consequence the rambling farmhouses stood farther apart.

"It will take us all day to go to Senor Cabrillo's and back to town," said Sam.

"It certainly will at the slow rate we're getting over the ground," admitted Jack.

"How much farther do you suppose we've got to go?"

"I couldn't tell you; but we must be more than halfway by this time. There is a house yonder. We'll stop there and make inquiries."

Ten minutes later they rode up to the front door of the building, which was a good-sized two-story house, built in the form of a square, with a patio, or court, laid out as a garden, in the center. The structure was built of brick, covered over with plaster and whitewashed. The boys dismounted and, leaving their mules standing unhitched, entered the house through the court in the free-and-easy manner of the country, and found their way into the patio. The place was deserted, and not a sound indicated the presence of life in the house. This, however, meant nothing to the boys, so they sat down on a rustic seat to await the coming of a peon, or a member of the family.

"How would you like to own a ranch of this kind?" said Sam.

"I wouldn't mind, if I had the money to run it," replied Jack.

"I haven't heard a sound yet. The family must be taking a morning siesta."

"But one of the many servants ought to show up. We can't stop here all day, pleasant as it is to rusticate in the shade. I don't know that we've any right to intrude further on the premises, but just the same I think I'll take a look around and try to scare up somebody. You can remain here," said Jack.

He got up and strolled over to a deep red curtain which hid a doorway. Passing behind it, he

found himself in a room and was astonished to find things in great confusion. He passed through into the next room, and found things upset there, too. If the house had been sacked by the advance guard of an invading army, it could not have presented a worse appearance. Jack, after passing through several rooms more or less upset, came to the kitchen. Here, where Jack expected to find activity aplenty, there was not a sound, nor the sign of a servant.

"This is mighty funny. The house appears to be actually deserted. That isn't right, even if the family were away. Then the condition of those rooms I passed through——"

He stepped into the space that would be called a yard in America and fell over the body of a peon, stark dead and quite cold. That took his breath away and assured him that something had happened here. He examined the body and saw a wound in the chest. The body had clearly lain there several hours, from which fact Jack judged that the plantation was wholly deserted. He returned to the patio and told Sam what he had seen. That young man was greatly astonished.

"You think the bandits were here, eh?" he said.

"I couldn't tell you. There isn't a sign of one of them at the back, except the corpse. He looks like a head servant. Let's go through the upper part of the building and see what we shall find there?"

The boys started to explore the upper floor of the house. Every room was the scene of confusion. Drawers had been pulled out and their contents scattered about the floor. To the great relief of the boys, not a dead or wounded member of the household was found.

"They've been carried off to prevent them giving information, I suppose," said Sam.

"While there's life, there's hope.' It's better to be a live prisoner than a dead witness," said Jack.

They went downstairs and out to the back, where they inspected the servants' quarters. There was no confusion here. They returned to the corpse, which lay stiff and stark just outside the kitchen door, in the shade of the broad piazza-like roof that protected this part of the house from the sun, with the grin of death on his features.

"There's something in his hand," said Jack, lifting it with difficulty, for it was almost as stiff as a poker.

He tried to open the clenched fingers, but they resisted his efforts. The horn handle of a knife was just visible under the man's body. Jack pulled it out.

"That paper may furnish a bit of evidence in this case," he said. "I must get it out of his fingers. Lend a hand here, Sam. I'll try and pry his fingers open with the point of the knife. You grab the end of the paper and pull away gently. Not too hard, mind you, or you might tear it."

Sam knelt down and poked his fingers toward the paper as Jack dug at the hand of the corpse with the knife point. After great difficulty and loss of time the crumpled paper was taken from the dead man's hand. Jack smoothed it out and looked at the writing on it. It was in English, and ran as follows:

"The Aztec ruins lies seventy miles southwest of Bastia. A million in golden ingots are hidden in the seventh vault. I have seen the gold with my own eyes. It is the treasure hidden by Montezuma when he realized that the triumph of Cortez was complete. The secret of its existence is closely guarded by a small community of Aztecs who live in the ruins and show visitors over it for a small consideration. Outside these last descendants of the once great race that controlled the destinies of Mexico before the arrival of the Spanish invaders, I am probably the only living man who has penetrated the mystery of the ruins. A secret passage leads to the seventh vault. I discovered it by accident, and it was my intention to re-visit the ruins later, with you, and remove at least a portion of the gold. It was not to be. I have been stricken by the hand of death and the gold is not for me. So to you, my faithful Pedro, I leave the knowledge. May it be of service to you. I have drawn a diagram of the vaults, which shows the location of the seventh vault and the secret passage. This I have buried for safety under the center brick of the red cross in the middle of the patio. With that in your possession, you hold the key to the Aztec treasure."

WILLIAM SANDERSON."

Jack perused the note, which was in small but plain handwriting, with intense interest.

"What is it all about, Jack?" asked Sam curiously.

"I'll tell you later," said Jack, folding up the writing and placing it in his pocket. "We had better remove this poor fellow to one of the rooms."

As they started to lift the body they heard footsteps, with the jingling of spurs, approaching.

"Here's some one now," said Sam.

They took a step toward the kitchen door, and were confronted by Sanchez Pinto and Bruno Villanos, looking more rascally than ever.

CHAPTER V.—Jack and Sam Arrange to Work for Senor Cabrillo.

"So we meet again, senor!" said Pinto, with an evil look.

"Well, what of it?" replied Jack.

"We find you and your companion beside a dead body. That requires an explanation."

"Maybe you think we killed the man?" sneered Jack.

The rascal shrugged his shoulders.

"If we informed the authorities at Progreso, it is quite possible they would regard your presence here under the circumstances as somewhat suspicious."

"The man has been dead all of eight or nine hours."

"Indeed!" said Pinto, lighting a cigarette with careless ease.

"Yes. We are going to carry the body into one of the rooms and notify the Progreso police about what has happened here."

"You will tell them you found a man murdered on a deserted plantation, eh?"

"I shall tell them I not only found a murdered

man, but that the plantation itself has been looted."

"By whom, senor?"

"Doubtless by the mountain robbers who are known to come this way occasionally."

"We have heard of them, have we not, Bruno?" said Pinto, turning to his companion.

"We have," replied that rascal, with a sardonic grin.

"Desperate fellows they are, too, eh?"

"Si. But not more desperate than the way these young senors acted toward us yesterday at the inn. Who knows but they may be connected with that band?"

The speaker looked maliciously at the two boys.

"I guess you know more about that band than we do!" flashed Jack.

"What should we know about those rascals?" said Pinto. "We are a couple of most respectable inhabitants of Progreso."

"You look it!" replied Jack sarcastically.

"But you hinted just now that we knew more about the robbers than you do. Explain yourself."

"Your friend, Villanos, said——"

"Ha! You know his name?"

"Yes, and yours, too. You are known as Sanchez Pinto."

The pair of scoundrels exchanged glances.

"Stand out of the way, senors, while we carry the body inside," said Jack.

They stepped aside and the boys raised the corpse between them, and, taking care to give the rascals a wide berth, entered the building with it. They laid it on the dining room table and covered it with a large cloth.

"Shall we go to the Cabrillo plantation, or return to Progreso and notify the police?" said Sam.

"We'll go on. We can tell Senor Cabrillo about what we discovered and he will doubtless send some of his people here. When we return to Progreso we'll inform the authorities if they haven't heard about the case in the meanwhile."

"All right. Whatever you say goes," said Sam.

So they mounted their mules and proceeded on their way. A mile farther on they came to another large plantation. They stopped and told the owner, a fine-looking native of the country, what had happened at the plantation they had left. Then they learned that the late occupant of the place was an American named William Sanderson, a widower, who had died a short time since, leaving all he possessed to his chief servant, Pedro Hernandez. The senor said he would send some of his people to the plantation to lay out the dead Pedro, and would see that the corpse was sent to Progreso and buried in the cemetery there with the last rights of the Church.

Jack and Sam, after being handsomely entertained, continued on their way, and shortly arrived at Senor Cabrillo's plantation. Jack presented the letter from Senor Guzman, and Senor Cabrillo said he could give them work—Jack as one of his overseers and Sam as his assistant. The matter being settled, the boys said they would return with their traps on the following day, and took their leave.

"Say, Jack, you promised to tell me what was written on that paper you took from the defunct Pedro," said Sam, after they were on their way.

"So I did. Well, here it is. Read it for yourself," and Jack handed him the paper.

Jogging along on his mule, Sam read every word of it.

"Gee! Do you believe there's any truth in that?" he said.

"Why not? William Sanderson appears to have been a fine man—not the kind of person who would lie about a thing like that, particularly when he was dying. You heard the reputation Senor Tasseda gave him, didn't you?"

"Yes. Couldn't have been better."

"Well, if he really wrote that letter, and there seems to be no doubt that he did, I believe it's so."

"That Montezuma's treasure is hidden in the seventh vault of the ruins?"

"Yes."

"But Montezuma lived about four hundred years ago."

"Suppose he did. Don't you suppose that gold will last four hundred years?"

"Sure. It will last indefinitely."

"Well, those Aztec ruins are out of the way, and Yucatan is pretty well out of the ordinary run of civilization in a way. There appears to be no legend or hint afloat intimating that the lost treasure of Montezuma, which history says unaccountably disappeared about the time Cortez captured the Mexican king, is down here in Yucatan, though everybody knows that the last surviving descendants of the Aztecs are living at those ruins, so why should any one think that those ruins hide anything of value? Any one can go there and be shown through the place for a trifling sum. As far as appearances go, there are no secrets to the ruins. That apparent absence of mystery is the best cloak for the concealment of a real mystery."

"That's right," nodded Sam.

"Now Sanderson writes that he accidentally discovered a secret passage that led him to what he called the seventh vault, where he actually saw the gold he speaks about in the letter. Judging from this, there are six known vaults, to which the public are admitted. The seventh is not known to any one but the Aztecs themselves, and there the treasure is as effectually hidden as though in the middle of a mountain. I never heard that any age limit had been put on those ruins, but they are supposed to date from Montezuma's time. That seems reasonable, for they are undoubtedly of Aztec origin, and are not likely to have been built after the Spaniards obtained full control of Mexico and the adjoining territory, of which Yucatan was a part. Do you get me?"

"Sure."

"So if that is the famous vanished treasure of Montezuma it was put in that vault over four hundred years ago, and has lain there ever since undisturbed, carefully watched over by the descendants of the original bunch that brought it down here from the City of Mexico."

"It seems to me that a watch was a superfluous precaution if it's so carefully hidden as to defy detection," said Sam.

"The watch is a mere matter of form—probably the fulfilment of an oath, passed down from descendant to descendant through four centuries. The ruins are less likely to be poked into and

disturbed by the presence of the Aztecs on the ground, just as a policeman on guard at the tomb of some hero will prevent vandals from chipping pieces out of the tomb to carry away as mementoes of their visit."

"To return to the treasure—how about the plan that the writer of the letter says he hid under the center brick of the red cross in the middle of the patio of that building? I noticed the cross while I was awaiting your return. It is quite a prominent object."

"I intend to look for it."

"On our way back?"

"Yes. Unless we find the house occupied by the peons sent by Senor Tasseda to look after Pedro's body. In that case we'll have a look in there to-morrow when we come back this way, when it will probably be deserted again."

"And if you find it, what then?"

"You and I will take a trip to the ruins and see if we can locate the gold."

By this time the boys had reached Senor Tasseda's plantation, and they made so bold as to drop in on him again. The senor was at his evening meal with his family, for it was now five o'clock. He came out to see the boys and insisted on them eating with him. They accepted the invitation and spent more than an hour at the place. The senor said he had sent four of his peons to the Sanderson place to look after the body of Pedro. Three of them were to remain there while the fourth went on to Progreso to get an undertaker, and to report the death of Pedro and the sacking of the house by the mountain robbers, presumably.

"We won't be able to get at the chart now," said Sam, when they were on the road again, "as we shall find the three peons in possession. We will have to put it off until to-morrow."

They stopped at the late William Sanderson's plantation, which he had held under an annual rental, and found the three peons there. After exchanging a few words with them, the boys proceeded on. It was well along in the evening when they stopped at the wine house again to see Pepita. Jack told her about their ride and what they discovered at the Sanderson plantation.

"The mountain robbers did it," she said.

The boys agreed with her, and then Jack told her about their encounter with Pinto and Villanos. She turned pale and shuddered.

"Did you come to blows again?" she said anxiously.

"Oh, no," replied Jack. "We had no trouble with them whatever."

"They fear you on even terms; but beware lest they catch you unawares. They will surely kill you if they can. Pinto never forgives a blow, and you nearly killed him. He will watch his chance and come on you like a snake in the grass."

Jack then said they must go, but assured her they would stop in the morning on their way back to Senor Cabrillo's.

CHAPTER VI.—Phil and Jim Work a Rascally Trick.

"Hello, where have you chaps been?" asked Phil Sketchley, when Jack and Sam came up to their room later.

"Out in the country," replied Jack.

"I hope you've had your supper, for you won't get any here at this hour."

"Sam and I enjoyed quite a beautiful repast at Senor Tessado's plantation on the road to Bastia."

"How came you to go there, and how far from town is it?"

"It's about twelve miles from here, and we stopped there on our way to Senor Cabrillo's plantation."

"What took you to Senor Cabrillo's?" asked Phil curiously.

"We called on Senor Guzman this morning and struck him for money."

Phil grinned.

"Did you get your shares?" he asked chucklingly.

"No, but he let us have a sovereign apiece."

"Only two, eh? And Jim and me got forty, with more to come."

"He told us he never gave either of you a cent."

"If he told you that, it must be so," said Phil, giving Jim a sly kick.

"Then why did you lie to us last evening?"

"We were just kidding you."

"Senor Guzman gave us a note to a Senor Cabrillo which, he said, would insure us work until the firm started up again. We went there and got taken on."

"You don't say. So you're going to work on a plantation? What doing—digging holes to plant seeds in or picking fruit for market?"

"I'm to be an overseer of a gang and Sam is to help me boss the peons."

"You'll have to work out in the sun. Just think of Phil and me sitting in the shade of a wine shop drinking aguardiente and——"

At that moment two brigandish-looking chaps, who had been watching the boys from the other side of the street, stepped up. "We wish to see the senors Sketchley and Bunce," said one of them.

"That's us," said the lads together. "What do you want with us?"

"The senors will learn if they step this way."

Neither Phil nor Jim liked the looks of the men and they declined to leave the doorway. The chap made a sign to his comrade, whereupon both laid hold of the two boys and dragged them out into the road with little ceremony.

"Hold on, there!" cried Jack, springing to their rescue, though he knew neither of the lads would have moved a finger in his behalf had matters been reversed.

"The young senor will not interfere," said the spokesman sharply. "We are not going to harm his friends, but give them a bit of warning."

Jack saw it would be useless and maybe dangerous to interfere, so he stepped back and kept watch with Sam. They saw Phil and Jim putting up a protest against something, whereupon the chief rascal threatened them. With evident reluctance they put their hands in their pockets, drew out their money and handed it over.

"Gee! Those rascals are robbing them," said Sam.

"Then it's time we took a hand," said Jack, rising.

The head rascal counted the sovereigns, handed a part back to the boys, and then, with a threat-

ening gesture, he and his companion walked away. The two boys returned to the door, looking sheepish and cast down.

"What did those chaps want with you?" Jack asked.

"Nothing!" growled Phil.

"Nothing! Why, they made you give up some of your money."

"We owed it to them," said Phil.

"All right. We don't want to know your business," said Jack. "Come on, Sam. It's time we turned in, for we've got to make an early start."

They walked upstairs, leaving the other two at the door.

"Our graft is over, confound it!" growled Jim.

"But we can get revenge by going to the insurance agent," said Phil, in a tone of suppressed rage.

"And get assassinated for doing it. Not much. It isn't your funeral, anyway. I'm the chap that holds the knowledge. You only know through me. Guzman has taken the bull by the horns and won't stand for the touch. If we told the agent, and were put out of the way right afterward, what good would it do? The insurance agent could prove nothing against the firm without my evidence. In the States we would hold the upper hand, but down here, where you can easily hire men to put a chap out of the way, the game won't work, at least in our case. If I squeal, we'll both be done up, for we haven't a friend in town to defend us. The game is up, and we might as well take our medicine and say nothing."

"The blamed scoundrels took away half our money."

"They could have kept all of it if they had wanted to. We have ten pounds left and we must make it last."

"Oh, hang the luck! I counted on the finest snap in the world."

"It can't be helped. There are no flies on Guzman. He knew we intended to bleed him right along, so he brought the matter to a head right away. He sent those chaps to intimidate us."

"But if we went to the insurance agent and told him that Guzman had threatened to have us killed if you squealed he'd see that we were protected."

"I doubt if the whole police in this burgh could protect us very long. They have a way of getting you down here on the quiet that beats the authorities. At any rate, I think too much of my life to take any chances."

"It's a shame," snarled Phil. "When our ten pounds are gone, we'll be broke."

"The money will last us some time if we're careful. It ought to carry us along till the firm opens up again."

"And then Guzman might throw us down to get square with us."

"We can take the next steamer for New Orleans. We have money enough to pay our way."

"Let's do it, and a couple of hours before we start we'll send a letter to the insurance agent accusing Guzman & Co. of causing the fire at their place in order to get the insurance money. You can promise to forward a sworn statement of the facts from New Orleans. Tell the agent we had to sneak because we knew it wouldn't be safe to stay in Progreso after giving the truth

away. Thus we'll get back good and hard at Guzman."

"I might agree to do it if I thought I could get something out of the agent for squealing."

"You could tell him to send you a couple of hundred dollars for the service you had done the company."

"I guess he would. Look what the company would save through your sworn statement. Guzman and his partner wouldn't get a cent of the insurance and would go to prison in addition."

"Say, do you think a pound was all Russell and Colton each got out of Guzman this morning?"

"That's what they said, isn't it? I don't think Guzman would give up any more. It's a wonder he parted with that without pressure."

"Those chaps are probably asleep by this time, and they ought to sleep hard after the journey they took to-day."

"What's that got to do with us?"

"Their door, like all on that floor, has no lock or bolt. We might go in and go through their clothes. If they had four or five pounds we could use it."

"Suppose one of them woke up and caught us?"

"Not much danger of that."

"You'd better do it, as it's your suggestion."

"If I do it alone, I'll keep all I get."

"Huh! Then I'll go with you."

"I expect you to if we're to share even."

The two lads made their way upstairs and paused outside the door of the room occupied by Jack and Sam. Jim softly opened the door and they glided in. Crossing to the bed, they looked at the sleepers.

"They're fast asleep," whispered Jim. "Go through those duds on that chair, and I'll tackle these."

Two gold sovereigns and something over \$4 in the change of the country they found in the two pairs of pants. They were disappointed at the results.

"Leave the change," said Jim. "It won't do to rob them of that."

"They told the truth—only a sovereign apiece."

"It will add \$5 to our funds. I wonder what they have in their jackets?"

Phil pulled Sanderson's letter out of Jack's.

"What's that?" asked Jim.

"An old letter, I guess."

"Slip it back. You don't want it."

Phil was about to do so when Sam suddenly sat up in bed.

"Who's there?" he asked.

Taken by surprise, Phil threw the jacket over Sam's head and he and Jim darted from the room and sought the shelter of their own. Phil still had the paper in his hand and he thrust it into his pocket, and both boys, hustling off their clothes, tumbled into bed in a hurry.

"Wake up, Jack!" cried Sam, shaking his companion.

"What's the matter?" asked the suddenly aroused Jack.

"Thieves, I guess."

"Thieves! Where are they?"

"Gone. They were here, two of them, a moment ago."

"What were they doing?"

"Had our clothes in their hands."

"They may have cleaned us out," said Jack, springing out of bed.

Sam followed him and they investigated their trousers.

"My money seems to be all right," said Jack, pulling out the silver, and not noticing in the darkness the absence of the goldpiece.

"So's mine. I caught them just in time. I wonder who they were?"

The boys did not think it necessary to count their money, for they figured if the thieves had got their clutches on it they'd have taken it all.

"We'd better barricade the door," said Sam, "or they might pay us another visit later."

They did it with their chest of drawers and turned in again. In the meanwhile Phil and Jim lay in their bed expecting a visit any moment from Jack and Sam. They intended to pretend they were asleep, and when aroused bluff it out. Nothing happened, and they began to breathe easier.

"They are not coming," said Jim. "Sam didn't recognize us."

"A good thing. We didn't gain much by going there. I must get rid of that letter so it won't accidentally incriminate us," said Phil.

"What did you want to bring it away for?"

"I didn't have time to return it to the jacket."

"Then you should have dropped it on the floor."

"I'll drop it out of the window."

"Roll it up into a ball first."

Phil got up and pulled the letter out of his pocket.

"I wonder if it's from his girl," said he curiously.

"What difference does it make who it's from?"

"No difference; but I guess I'll take a squint at it."

"You'll have to strike a light and that will give us away."

"All's quiet along the Potomac. I'll chance it."

He lighted a tallow dip, opened the paper, and began to read.

"Holy smoke!" he exclaimed.

"What's the matter?" asked Jim.

But Phil didn't answer him until he had read every word.

"What do you suppose this is?" he said.

"How should I know?"

"It's about those Aztec ruins we've heard about, and says a treasure in gold worth a million is hidden in one of the vaults."

"The deuce you say! Does it give a clue to it?"

"No; but it says that a diagram of the vaults, showing the location of the treasure and how to reach it through a secret passage, is hidden under the center brick of the red cross in the middle of the patio."

"What patio?" asked Jim, now interested.

"In some house."

"That's rather indefinite. Who wrote that letter?"

"A man named William Sanderson."

"Then the patio is in his house."

"Very likely; but the question is—where is his house?"

"We must find out to-morrow. I wonder how Russell got hold of the paper?"

"We needn't worry about that. We've got it now, and it is up to us to play a swift march on him."

"So as to get hold of the diagram?"

"Exactly."

"Hold on. Russell might have possession of it already."

"I don't believe he has had time to get it. He doubtless got hold of this paper yesterday—found it on his journey. We must locate the diagram without delay, and then——"

"We'll start after the treasure. Good. If Russell suspects we have it and follows us with Sam Colton, it will be a race between us."

"Yes—a race for gold."

Phil stowed the paper away in his pocket and turned in.

CHAPTER VII.—The Missing Diagram.

Next morning when Jack and Sam got up they examined their money more carefully, and found their sovereigns missing.

"Gee! that's tough. The thieves got away with the best part of our funds," he said, with a blank look.

"Evidently they did, but it's mighty funny they should leave the silver behind. They couldn't have got the sovereigns without pulling all the money out of our pockets and then hunting through it for the gold pieces. Thieves don't generally take all that trouble. They would have taken all if they were common robbers."

"You're right. It couldn't have been the landlord, for there were two of them, though it's true he might have brought his helper with him."

"Why should he have done so? It was a one-man job. I don't believe he had anything to do with it. He has a good reputation, and we've lived with him over four months without suspecting him of not being square. It's a pity you didn't get a good look at the rascals."

Sam was silent for a moment.

"Say, do you know I half suspect the two were Sketchley and Bunce."

"You don't mean that. It would be a pretty low down trick for them to spring on us—our own fellow clerks and countrymen."

"Well, they're capable of doing dirty work. Last night's incident shows they must have worked off some trick on those brigandish fellows to bring them around demanding satisfaction, which they got by threats, judging from their actions."

"I don't like to believe them guilty of it."

He shook his trousers and started to put them on when something dropped on the floor. He stooped and picked it up. It proved to be a cuff button with an old English S on it, which he recognized as having seen on Sketchley.

"I'm afraid you're right, Sam. This seems to prove your charge," and he showed Sam the cuff button.

"It was them, all right," said Sam. "That accounts for only the two gold pieces being taken. They were afraid to take the silver."

"They had a little sympathy for us."

"Sympathy be jiggered! Those chaps don't know the meaning of the word. I'm done with them now; but we must make them give us our money back. I'll knock the daylights out of both of them if they don't refund," and Sam looked as if he meant what he said.

Certainly he was physically capable of enforcing his demand. When they went downstairs they found Phil and Jim at the table.

"You're up early," said Jack.

"We're going out to look for work."

"I thought you fellows didn't intend to do any work?"

"We didn't, but two rascals took most of our money last night, so we've got to do something."

"I thought you said you could easily get more—another twenty pounds—when that was gone?"

"Yes, you had a private graft, you said," put in Sam.

"We were only fooling you," said Jim.

"Seems to me one never can depend on what you say. Are you telling the truth now about going to look for work?" said Jack.

"Sure," said Jim.

"Well, before you start out Sam and I will trouble you to refund the sovereigns you took out of our pockets last night."

"What are you talking about?" asked Phil uneasily.

"You know what I'm talking about," said Jack calmly.

"No, I don't. Do you, Jim?"

"Sure not."

"Look here," said Sam angrily, "you know you're lying. You were both of you in our room last night, and you went through our pockets. We had two sovereigns and a bunch of change. You took the gold and sneaked when I woke up and saw you."

"Come off. Do you think we'd steal your money?"

"We didn't think you'd be guilty of such a contemptible trick, but we know it now, so come up with those gold pieces, or there'll be something doing right away."

"Where's your proof to show we were in your room?" said Phil.

"Here," said Jack, producing the cuff button. "This is your property. I found it on my trousers when I started to put them on."

Phil was staggered and didn't know what to say.

"How do you know it's mine?" he finally said, in a sulky tone.

Jack seized his wrist and held it up.

"Doesn't this button match that one? Its mate is missing, for you have only a bone button holding your other cuff. Isn't that evidence enough?"

"I'll give in. We just played that trick on you for fun. We intended to return the money after we had the laugh on you. Here's your sovereign," and Phil handed him one.

"Here's yours," said Jim, tossing another to Sam.

"I hope you're satisfied now," said Phil.

"We are—that you fellows are not the kind of chaps we want to associate with any more," said Jack. "Stealing money is a mighty low thing to do."

"I tell you it was only a joke," protested Phil.

"We don't appreciate such jokes. Go on with your breakfast and have nothing more to say to us."

"Oh, all right. I guess we can get along without you. You fellows never did run with us, anyway, so we won't mourn because you've cut us," said Phil.

Sketchley and Bunce hurried through their breakfast and left the room.

"That settles them and us," said Sam. "Good riddance."

After breakfast the boys told the landlord they were going away for probably a month to work on a plantation on the Bastia road. He said he was sorry to hear it, but he supposed they would have to do something now they were out of work. Jack and Sam went to their room and packed up their traps in their suitcases.

"Better put that paper in your case," said Sam. "You might lose it."

"It has no great value in itself, but if I lost it the finder would become wise to the secret of the ruins, and then we might lose all chance of making anything out of the treasure. I'll put it in the suitcase. Why, where is it?"

"I hope you haven't lost it," said Sam.

"I had it last night when I went to bed, and now it's gone."

"Say, do you think those chaps took it?"

"You mean Sketchley and Bunce?"

"Yes."

"It isn't improbable."

"That would be the worst thing that could happen. They'd be sure to go for that treasure themselves."

"They'd have to find the diagram first."

"The paper shows where it's hidden."

"But they would have to locate the house."

"They have their clue in Sanderson's name. All they will have to do will be to inquire where he lived. Probably he was well known in this town."

"I wonder where those fellows are? Run to their room and see if they are there."

"I don't believe they are," said Sam, rushing to find out.

He returned presently and said they were not in their room and that their suitcases were missing.

"We must beat them to the plantation, Jack, and get possession of the diagram," said Sam.

"We have no time to lose."

They rushed their departure, went around to the place where they hired the mules the day before and got two others, which they promised to return by a peon. Strapping their suit cases on behind, they started off. When they reached the wine house kept by Pierre Catel they stopped long enough for Jack to exchange a few words and a kiss with Pepita. He learned from the girl that Phil and Jim had passed the house a short time before, bound out the Bastia road.

"Those rascals are ahead of us," said Jack, when he remounted.

"What—Phil and Jim?" said Sam.

"Yes. For once in their lives they are uncommonly spry."

"They have probably learned where the late Mr. Sanderson's house is and are not letting the grass grow under their feet in order to beat us out."

"If they secure the diagram we will follow them and take it away from them by force."

"Of course. We couldn't think for a minute of letting them benefit by it."

They put the mules to their best speed and made the dust fly. After reeling off several miles, they were obliged to pull up under a shade

tree to cool off a bit. So far they had seen no signs of Phil and Jim. But they expected to overtake them before they reached the Sanderson plantation, which had been inspected by a force of police who had then started for the mountain range to make another effort to capture the robbers.

"Phil and Jim must be well mounted, otherwise we should have overtaken them," said Sam. "There's the house yonder. We ought to find them there at work on the center brick of the patio."

"We ought to tan their hides for stealing that letter."

"I'm ready to help you do it," said Sam.

They turned in at the path which led through the cactus wall and dismounted in front of the portico. This time they tied the mules to a stake with rings erected for the purpose. They rushed into the house and through to the patio. Their eyes told them that their rivals had been there before them. The center brick of the red cross was thrown aside, revealing a narrow hole.

"The paper is gone," said Jack, as he looked into it.

CHAPTER VIII.—The Race for Gold.

There was nothing for them to do but return to their mules and continue the chase. But before doing it they looked all around the place to make sure that Phil and Jim were not hiding there. They stopped at Senor Tasseda's plantation to inquire if any one about the place had noticed the two boys passing along the road. Nobody had, so they were unable to figure how far in advance their foxy rivals were.

"Senor Cabrilla's place is but three miles ahead," said Sam. "If we don't catch those chaps before we reach it, and I rather doubt that we do, we'll have to keep on and let the senor do without our valuable services for the present."

"He is in no rush. We'll keep on, of course. That diagram is of the first importance to us. Other things will have to wait," said Jack.

So they journeyed on and in due course passed the Cabrillo plantation. It was after midday by that time and the boys were feeling hungry.

"We'll have to stop at the next plantation and ask for something to eat," said Sam. "We can't travel all day on an empty stomach."

"Neither can the mules," said Jack. "They will have to be fed."

A mile farther on they came to an inn, where travelers from Progreso always stopped to dine if they left town early in the morning. The boys reined in here, a peon took their mules in charge and the lads went into the public room to make inquiries. Thirty minutes before, two boys had stopped there, had their mules fed and watered, had eaten a light meal of fried eggs and fruit, bought two flasks of wine and gone on again. Their description answered to Phil and Jim.

"They evidently fear pursuit from us," said Jack, "and are doing their best to keep out of the way. We can't afford to stay here long."

Three-quarters of an hour elapsed before they were able to proceed, which gave their rivals the advantage of an hour and a quarter headway. Inquiry had developed the fact that there was a

village four hours' ride ahead, where they would have to put up for the night unless they pushed on and took the chances of hospitality of one of the plantations beyond.

"Do you think Sketchley and Bunce will stop there?" said Sam.

"They may. If they do, we'll have them. If they don't, we will have to keep on ourselves after getting our supper. I had no idea when we started that they would elude us this way. They appear to be taking no chances."

"They are hot after the treasure and are sure we will leave no stone unturned to come up with them. For that reason it seems to me that they won't stop at the village any longer than they can help."

"But they won't travel all night."

"It is hard to say what they will do. They know we are determined chaps, and they know what will happen if we do catch them. They will use every means in their power to reach Bastia ahead of us. Once there, they figure they will be comparatively safe."

"Oh, well, we are certain to catch them at the ruins, anyway. Should they beat us to Bastia, they will rest there a day or two and then try to sneak down to the ruins. Or, anticipating that we have gone ahead, they may remain at Bastia a week or more to tire us out. It all depends on how clever they are."

They reached the solitary inn in the village at sundown and put up there. Phil and Jim had been there, got their supper and gone on.

"This is a race for gold for fair," said Sam, "but the race is not always won by the swift, though I think it would be if our animals were a little swifter."

Jack and Sam here met with the first obstacle. Their supper was delayed and when they had eaten it they found something had gone wrong with one of their mules. They lost several hours and did not suspect that they were the victims of a job put up on them. Phil and his companion had paid the innkeeper to delay their pursuers if they showed up. Thus the pair of young rascals secured a long lead in the race, which they kept all night, and then confident they were safe for some hours, they put up at a cabin along the road and snatched several hours sleep.

When they left around ten o'clock they paid the people to say they had not seen them pass that way. Jack and Sam pushed on till four in the morning and then camped in a field near the road. They awoke about seven and started on again. When they came to the cabin they made inquiries about Sketchley and Bunce, and received negative replies.

"They must have passed in the night some time," said Sam, "and, of course, these people did not see them. See if they will sell us a breakfast."

The owner agreed to do that, and while they were waiting the boys hung around outside and talked to the two children. From them they accidentally gleaned the fact that Phil and Jim had stopped at the cabin several hours, and had paid their father to keep the fact dark. The boys learned that their rivals had left the cabin about eight o'clock. It was now after eleven, so that the foxy lads were three hours ahead of them.

"Well, what do you think of that?" said Sam, with a look of disgust. "I'll bet Sketchley and Bunce fixed the landlord of the inn. That would account for the annoying delay we had there. Now we know what to expect along the road. They have money, and will use it to bribe every innkeeper they meet. We are up against it, but we'll win out. Just wait till I can lay my hands on either of those chaps. I'll make them think a Western tornado has got them in its clutches."

They got a good breakfast, had the mules fed and started on again. Their course now led around the foot of the mountain range, with Bastia fifteen miles away. Their rivals were certain, barring accidents, to reach the town first, if they were not already there, and so the boys ceased to push their mules at fast speed, but allowed them to take their own way.

"We will not remain longer at Bastia than to get a good night's sleep and then we will start for the ruins," said Jack. "I have no great fear that those fellows will secure any of the treasure, even if they should arrive first on the ground. What I do figure is that their actions will arouse the suspicions of the Aztecs, that they will be closely watched, get caught looking for the secret passage and the diagram taken from them. In that case, we will be done out of our chances, for we can do nothing without the diagram," said Jack.

"That's right," nodded Sam. "They are just the kind of fellows to run blindly against trouble. Only by the shrewdest kind of work can an outsider get a look in at that treasure. With the diagram in our possession I believe it would be a contest of wits between us and the Aztecs, for I'll gamble on it those chaps are never asleep. If Sketchley and Bunce reach the ruins first and go prowling around in a suspicious way, that will be the end of this race for gold for all concerned."

"Our only chance is to push on and head them off between Bastia and the ruins along that seventy-mile stretch," said Jack. "I believe they will remain in the town a week or two in an effort to throw us off the chase. With only the few hours' headway they have now, they will reason that it won't pay them to go on. We should be certain to meet at the ruins even if they arrived first on the ground. They have funds enough to put in a month or more at Bastia, while they know that we are next door to being strapped. They possess every advantage over us as the case stands, but if we can manage to get between them and the ruins I fancy they'll have nothing on us after that."

"But if we do get the diagram away from them they will probably queer us in revenge," said Sam.

"How will they?"

"By putting the Aztecs on to us."

"I did not think of that. We must prevent them doing it."

"The only way will be to make prisoners of them and hold them somewhere till we have either succeeded or failed in our venture."

"Yes. I suppose we'll have to do that if we can."

They passed another roadside inn at two o'clock and stopped for some light refreshment, and to feed and water their beasts. They made no in-

quiries of the landlord, but instead asked one of the servants about Phil and Jim. They learned they had had dinner there and left more than an hour since in company with three men for Bastia, which was but three miles away.

"They have reached town by this time," said Jack, "and have won the first lap of the race. We won't stop at Bastia, but push right on, for it's possible they may not stop there, either. When we leave here they will be only two hours ahead of us. My object is to lose no chance of getting between them and the ruins. I think everything depends on that."

"I agree with you," nodded Sam.

Jack inquired of the landlord if there was any short cut leading in the direction of the Aztec ruins.

"You are going there?" he said.

"Yes. We belong in Progreso, and the store where we were employed having burned down, we have a short vacation and we are putting it in to the best advantage. The Aztec ruins we have heard are a great curiosity, and we want to inspect them," said Jack.

"They are indeed a great curiosity, senor," replied the landlord. "It would be better that you keep on to Bastia and then take the road south. It is an excellent road. You can gain it beyond Bastia by a path half a mile from here that leads through the mountains, but I would not advise you to take it. The time you would save is of small importance to the dangers of the mountains. Not only is the mountain road dangerous in places, but you might be captured and robbed by the bandits, who are a bad lot."

"They wouldn't make much out of us, for we have very little money."

"In that case they would not bother with you. You are different to the two boys who stopped here a couple of hours ago. They had plenty of gold."

"They were foolish to show it."

"Si, senor. They were off with three men whom I have my suspicions of."

"What suspicions?"

"I fear they were spies employed by the robbers. They saw the boys had gold and plenty of it, and I fear their intentions were to rob the boys between this and Bastia, or perhaps entice them into the mountains over the short cut."

At this information Jack and Sam exchanged looks. Suppose their rivals were robbed not only of their money, but of the diagram as well—it would greatly complicate matters.

CHAPTER IX.—In the Mountain Range.

"What do you think about that, Jack?" said Sam, in English.

"It looks bad for Sketchley and Bunce. They were always fond of showing how much they were worth, and putting on a big front. It's a wonder they never were robbed of a night in Progreso. If they have fallen into the hands of disguised bandits, they will be cleaned out down to their shirts."

"Serve them right, but the diagram will fall into the hands of the robbers, and probably the letter which explains its value, too. Then good

night to the treasure. The gang will descend on the ruins in force, kill the Aztecs, and carry off the gold."

"And quit the country for good, for the affair would make such a stir that the government would send a company of soldiers after them to recover the treasure. The soldiers, however, could not cross into Mexico after them, if they went that way, nor into British Honduras or Guatemala to the south, so they would have a good chance of getting away."

"How will we know for certain whether the robbers have got them or not?"

"It is hard to say."

The landlord was asked his ground for suspecting the three men, and confessed that the only thing he had against them was their faces, which he didn't like.

"After all, it seems to be only a matter of speculation on the landlord's part that the three men who went off with Sketchley and Bunce were suspicious characters," said Jack. "The thing for us to do is to take the short cut and chance all the dangers of the mountains in order to get between those lads and the ruins."

"That's what we'll do. We probably won't run across the robbers."

They remained an hour and a half at the inn, to give themselves and the mules a good rest for the trip through the mountains, and then they departed with full directions from the landlord relative to the short cut and what it led to, though the boniface protested that they were foolish to follow it; but then, with a shrug of the shoulders, he said he might expect anything from los Americanos.

"The man we got the mules from will probably send to Senor Cabrillo's for them when they don't turn up in a day or two, and will learn that we did not show up there, although expected. Then he'll have a fit," laughed Sam.

"He'll get them back some time, with the price for the time we've used them," said Jack. "Should we be so lucky as to secure some of the treasure we'll make him happy with a present in addition."

As the road still led along the foothills of a spur of the mountain range, it was not cultivated and blooming like the first twenty-five miles they had traversed. The road itself was in fine shape, all the way from Progreso to Bastia, and the boys had passed many vehicles of divers kinds bound to the coast, and were passed by some en route to Bastia. At length they came to the short cut. It was not a road, but a bridle path, though it was occasionally traversed by wagons. Travel this way, however, had dwindled since the bandits were known to infest the range which they used as a hiding place and base of operations against the country roundabout.

"Well, here goes," said Jack, turning his mule into the path.

Sam followed. The way was tolerably level at first, but by and by it became a winding ascent, though the grade was very easy. Sundown found them several miles from the road up on a plateau from which they caught a distant view of the town of Bastia, its windows reflecting the light of the setting sun. A long distance off to the right they could see the road they had left, lying like a dirty yellow ribbon across the country.

They had brought a bountiful cold spread with them from the inn, enough to last them through the mountains, and they stopped to have their supper before darkness, which came on suddenly in that latitude, descended upon them. They intended to travel all night in order to get out of the range as soon as they could, provided they were able to do so under the brilliant starlit sky, which was the rule in Yucatan, and the neighboring States.

"I rather like this divergence from the road," remarked Sam. "It varies the monotony of the road we've been following for two days."

"You may change your mind when we come to the dangerous places," said Jack.

"Oh, I don't know. A little danger adds spice to one's life."

"There is no lack of that kind of spice down in these republics. The country has been quiet since we came to it, but there's no telling when some hot-headed native politician will start a revolution."

"In which case a traveling foreigner would find things both exciting and perilous."

"He certainly would."

"Let us hope the country continues tranquil while we're in it. Say, this isn't bad pastry for a country inn, is it?"

"No; it's first rate."

"It tastes like—hello, what's this?"

The mountain breeze, which felt delightful after a hot day's ride blew a paper into Sam's lap.

"Looks like a paper," said Jack, rising and stretching himself.

Sam opened it.

"Great mackerel! What do you suppose it is?" he cried, in some excitement.

"How should I know?"

"It's Sanderson's letter."

"You don't mean it's the letter those chaps stole from my pocket?" cried Jack.

"That's just what I do mean. Look for yourself."

Jack took it from Sam. One glance assured him it was the identical paper.

"Those chaps have taken the short cut themselves, and will beat us to the ruins after all if they push on without delay," said Jack, in a tone of vexation. "And we thought we were turning the trick on them. Hang it, they're smarter than I gave them credit for."

"It looks that," said Sam. "They threw this letter away, for it is really of no use to them. The diagram is what counts."

"It's no use to us, either, but I'll keep it, anyway. For fear we might run across the mountain robbers, I'll hide it in the hole in my saddle. Then it will be safe from prying eyes, whatever happens."

"We might overtake those chaps along the short cut. They'll never think about our taking it. They'll figure that we will keep straight on to Bastia, and maybe called on the police of that town to hunt them up. I'll bet they're laughing in their sleeves at us and are taking their time. We are quite liable to find them camped along the trail."

"Oh, if we were only so fortunate!" said Jack. "We'd soon have the diagram in our possession."

"I'll bet we would. If there was a stream close

by I'd be in favor of ducking them in it to take the conceit out of them."

It was dark by this time, and feeling rested and refreshed, they remounted their mules and proceeded on. They now entered the wild part of the range, losing sight of the surrounding landscape, which the stars illumined in a misty way. The path carried them into a rocky defile. On either side the mountain rose a hundred feet or more. Its sides were covered with bushes, diversified with a tree here and there. The general effect was not a whole lot different from a similar scene in the Rocky Mountains, or any other American range.

The mouth of the defile opened out on a precipice, where a waterfall thundered down the mountain side, leaping from rock to rock, and losing itself in the depths. There was just room here for a wagon to skirt the precipice, and the boys guessed this was one of the dangerous spots along the route, but it wasn't dangerous for them as the mules had plenty of room, were sure-footed, and trotted along in as unconcerned a way as they had upon the public road. Thence their path led downward through a gloomy ravine, where the mountain peaks shut out the larger part of the sky. This ravine seemed endless to the boys, and they found it full of danger spots.

"First, we go up, up, up, and then we go down, down, down," carolled Sam, as he jogged on after his companion.

"That's what a skyrocket does only it goes faster than we do," said Jack.

Here they swung around a jutting spur of rock and saw a light ahead.

"A light!" exclaimed Jack. "Haul in. We must proceed with caution. That may be the stronghold of the mountain robbers, and it behooves us to be careful."

"This is growing exciting," said Sam, not alarmed at Jack's suggestion.

They halted and consulted. Jack said they had better dismount and lead the mules. This plan was adopted, and they proceeded slowly. They soon made out that the light came from the window of a house.

"Maybe some woodcutter lives here," said Sam.

"That's rather doubtful, I think," said Jack.

"Do you suppose the robbers would have a house? I should think a secret cave away from the mountain path would be safer for them, as the soldiers come in here looking for them every once in a while."

"Your point is well taken. Still I don't know what kind of people would care to live in this solitude traversed by the bandits."

"We'd better investigate the house before we attempt to pass it."

"I intend to. We'll halt here. You stay with the mules while I go forward and see what I can make out of the place."

They came to a halt under a tree and Jack went forward alone. He used caution because if some of the robbers were in the house, they were not unlikely to have a watcher outside on the lookout. He pushed his way slowly from tree to tree and rock to rock, but saw nothing that resembled a man on guard. It was Jack's idea that a watcher would have been stationed some distance up the ravine at that end so that in case of the approach of an enemy the man could

hustle back in time to give the alarm. When Jack got close to the house the swinging sign told him the place was a public house.

"I guess the landlord must depend on the robbers for trade nowadays," thought the boy. "Probably they are such good customers that he is doing as well as when he entertained honest folk. This would be just the place for Sam and I to stop a little while if we dared, but I guess it's too risky. The landlord is certainly in league with the bandits, otherwise he wouldn't last long."

Jack approached the window and looked in. It was the public room of an inn he looked into. There were tables and chairs, and a bar, and the windows were all open to admit air, but being in the mountains, where the temperature was cooler than elsewhere, it was surrounded by regular walls, like any ordinary house. There were a number of men, rough-looking fellows they were, in the room, and in the center stood two men with their backs toward Jack. Their figures looked familiar to him. The taller of the two had a paper in his hand which he was examining. In a moment or two he half turned and then Jack recognized him as Sanchez Pinto.

"Whew! That rascal here? It wouldn't be healthy for me to meet him here. The other fellow is Villanos for a dollar, though I can't see his face. I'll gamble on it they belong to the robber band. Pepita almost said so. I'm afraid Sam and I have walked or ridden into a bad box."

At that moment Pinto spoke, and his tones were as one in authority.

"Fetch the prisoners here," he said.

"Prisoners!" breathed Jack. "That settles it. These chaps are a part of the bandit band."

Two of the men disappeared through a door at the back. They presently returned leading the prisoners. Jack gasped when he saw them. They were Phil Sketchley and Jim Bunce, and very miserable and unhappy they both looked, too.

CHAPTER X.—End of the Race.

Sanchez Pinto looked them over critically.

"I think I have seen you boys before," he said. "What brings you here in the mountains?"

"We were on our way to visit the Atzec ruins, and took the short cut through the range to save time," said Phil.

"You put up at this inn for the night, eh?"

"No. We were brought here by three men who robbed us of all our money, and then locked us in a small room."

"You were robbed and brought here? What an outrage, young senors," said Pinto, with a grin. "Look around and tell me if the men are in this room."

"They are not here," said Phil, after scanning the faces of those present.

"What a pity! I would have forced them to disgorge their spoil. They must have been some of the bandits of the mountains. A rascally set, are they not, my friends?" turning to the men.

The men unanimously agreed that they were, though they seemed to take the matter as a great joke. Then Pinto called the landlord.

"How is it that you permitted three great ras-

cals to drag these poor boys in here and lock them in a room?" he said.

The landlord protested that he knew nothing about the matter.

"Very well. I accept your statement. These boys say they are on their way to the Aztec ruins, and now that they have been robbed they have no money to pay for supper or bed. Provide them with both and charge it up to me."

"Certainly, senor," said the landlord, with a bow.

"Now, young senors, I found this paper on the floor. Is it your property?"

"Yes," said Phil eagerly, after taking a look at it.

"It seems to be a plan of some building, a floor in some building. Perhaps you will explain to me its meaning?"

"Sure," said Jim. "It's a cellar of the new building Guzman & Co. is going to build in Progreso. We carried it off by accident. There are to be seven vaults in it to hold goods that are to be dried out before being shipped. The center vault where you see the cross is to have a big furnace. This passage leads to it from the corridor that runs all around the vaults, and that little cross marks the door. Now you know all about it."

Jack, standing outside the window and hearing and seeing everything that was going on inside, fairly gasped at Bunce's capabilities as an all-around liar. He had never seen the diagram, but he was satisfied the paper that Pinto held in his hand was Sanderson's plans of the interior of the Aztec ruins. Bunce evidently was trying to hoodwink Pinto as to its real character, and his nerve and assurance were certainly colossal. If there ever is an occasion when a lie is justifiable, Jack was willing to confess that Bunce was justified in the course he took.

Jack doubted if Sketchley would have been equal to the effort. The least hesitation or embarrassment would have convinced Pinto that he was lying, for he suspected the diagram to be something important. Bunce's glib readiness and apparent frankness completely deceived him, and he handed the paper over to him with the remark:

"Here, take it."

Then turning to his companions, he said:

"My friends, we must make up a purse for these poor robbed boys to help them on their way. I will contribute a dollar."

All hands chipped in a piece of silver, the whole only amounting to about five dollars. This was handed to Bunce.

"There, young senors, that is the best we can do for you. You had better go back to Progreso, and visit the Aztec ruins another time. Then give the mountains a wide berth. You see, I and my friends travel in force to protect ourselves from the mountain rascals," said Pinto, with another of his grins.

His speech didn't deceive Jack, if it did Phil and Jim. It was clear that Pinto had his reasons for wishing to impress the two boys with his honesty and that of his companions. He was constantly traveling between Bastia and Progreso, and it would not do for the impression to get around that he had any connection with the mountain robbers.

The landlord at this point came in with supper for the two boys, and they sat down to eat it, though not in a cheerful frame of mind, for the loss of their money placed them in an embarrassing position, as the five dollars given them would not last them long, and they had seventy miles to cover before they reached the ruins. Pinto and Villanos seated themselves at a table and began talking in a low tone together, while the men went to the bar and ordered drinks. Jack thought the chance propitious for passing the inn, so he hurried back to Sam and they got the mules in motion again. They kept as far away from the inn as the road permitted, and passed the house in safety. After getting some distance down the path, Jack told Sam what happened in the inn while he was looking through the window.

"So Sketchley and Bunce are there?" said Sam.

"Yes, and they're going to stop all night."

"And Bunce recovered the diagram?"

"He did. That chap is a past master at the art of lying."

"He certainly is. What a nerve to tell that rascal that the diagram was the plan of the cellar in Guzman & Co.'s new building! He deserves a medal."

"Well, we are now where we want to be— ahead of those chaps. We will lay for them somewhere beyond the mountains and recover the diagram."

"And then what shall we do to keep them from getting back at us by betraying the purpose of our visit to the ruins?"

"We might find it advisable to let them stand in with us on a small part of the treasure. There ought to be enough of it to do that."

"I don't like the idea of joining hands with those chaps."

"Neither do I, but I'm afraid we'll be compelled to in order to keep their mouths closed."

"They'll demand an even division."

"They won't get it. They have acquired their knowledge of the treasure by theft, and they are not entitled to a bit of it. If we consent to let them in it must be on our own terms."

"Suppose they won't agree to that?"

"They would be foolish not to, since half a loaf is better than no bread."

"Sketchley is one of those fellows who would cut his nose off to spite his face."

"But Bunce isn't. If we bring him into line, Sketchley will have to agree."

"We can try your plan and see how it works."

On through the silence and solitude of the range they rode slowly on. About midnight they came to a deserted hut.

"I vote we put up here for the night. I'm pretty well fagged out," said Sam.

"I don't think it's safe for us to stay in the mountains. We can sleep when we get out on the other side."

"When will we get on the other side?"

"If I had ever been this way before, I'd be able to tell you; but as I haven't I'm no wiser than you are about it."

"Well, I'm dead tired."

"So am I, but I don't feel like taking any chances."

At that moment they heard voices approaching them.

"We'll have to hide among the trees," said Jack. "Quick, dismount, and lead your mule under cover."

The boys barely had time to successfully execute this move when several men came along on mules.

"I wonder what news the captain brings us this time?" said one. "I hope it is good. We made nothing out of that plantation. Caramba! I do not fancy such bootless enterprises. The Progreso police have been after us because Villanos made a corpse of the only person we found there."

"The fellow resisted us. Had he been reasonable, he would not have got killed. How the captain could have made such a mistake in taking us to a place where there was nothing to gain is surprising to me."

The men passed on and their voices gradually died away up the path.

"There's no doubt about the character of those men. They were with the bunch that invaded the Sanderson plantation and killed Pedro. They are bound for the inn to meet Pinto, who undoubtedly is the leader of the robbers, but is trying to keep the fact from leaking out. It's fortunate we did not run into them."

They did not stop at the hut, but kept on through the mountains, coming out at a gorge just as daylight came with tropical suddenness upon the landscape. Here the short cut widened out into a rough wagon road, and led to the southwest. They tied their mules in a grove of trees and lay down themselves to snatch a few hours of much needed repose. It was noon before Jack awoke, and, taking note of the position of the sun, he was afraid they had slept too long, and had thereby allowed their rivals to pass them and gain the advantage once more. He figured, however, the long time it had taken them to come from the inn, and then judged that Phil and Jim could not have covered the distance within the time when they were likely to have started on their way again after breakfast.

Without disturbing Sam, who still slept soundly, he went to the edge of the grove and watched the wagon road in the direction of the range. An hour passed and there was no sign of the coming of their rivals. He went back, fed the mules with the feed they had brought from the inn on the Bastia road, took them to a brook and watered them, and then ate his own breakfast. Sam showed no disposition to wake up, and Jack decided to let him have his sleep out, as there was no particular reason for waking him.

Resuming his watch, another hour passed away and the road in both directions remained deserted of human life. Then Sam awoke of his own accord. He came out of the grove looking for Jack.

"Oh, there you are," he said. "What time is it?"

"It's well along in the afternoon," replied his friend.

"Gee! As late as that? Why didn't you awaken me?"

"What was the use?"

"How long have you been awake?"

"About three hours."

"And those chaps haven't shown up yet?"

"If they had, I should have aroused you."

"Maybe they went back the way they came,

for with only a small sum of silver in their clothes the long trip to the ruins must look kind of precarious to them."

"I can't guess what course they have taken. They ought to be along now if they are coming this way."

"Suppose they don't show up—what are we going to do about getting the diagram?"

"I haven't thought about it. Had your breakfast?"

"No. I guess I'll go and eat what's left in my saddle bag, for I feel pretty hungry."

Sam disappeared into the grove, but soon returned with the package containing the food. He sat down beside Jack and ate it. It was after four o'clock and the boys were becoming dubious about the coming of their rivals when Jack exclaimed:

"I believe they are coming now. I see two persons on mules coming this way from the gorge."

"I hope they are our meat," said Sam.

"Get across the road and hide in the bushes. When I step out and accost them, you follow suit from the other side. We must grab the mules by the head and stop them, then they can't give us the slip," said Jack.

Sam slipped to the other side of the road and got out of sight. Down the road at a slow pace came Phil and Jim. They were discouraged over the loss of their money, and did not see how they were going to make out for food and lodging all the way to the ruins. It was quite as bad to return empty-handed to Progreso, for they would be broke when they got there, and they knew of no way to raise any funds save by going to work if they could find anything to do.

To attempt to strike Guzman after what had happened was out of the question. Under these circumstances they figured that the only course that promised results was to keep on and endeavor to penetrate the secret passage that led to the treasure vault in the ruins, fill their pockets with gold and make their escape. Retaining the diagram they thought they would be able to repeat the trick later on. The uncertainty of success, however, depressed their spirits, and they rode on in silence. They no longer thought about pursuit on the part of Jack and Sam, for they believed they had eluded those lads by taking the short cut through the mountains.

They were not prepared for the surprise that awaited them. When they came opposite the ambush, Jack jumped out and seized Bunce's mule. A moment later Sam had hold of Sketchley's animal. The young rascals gasped when they recognized who had held them up.

CHAPTER XI.—On the Eve of the Enterprise.

"So we've got you at last!" said Jack.

"What do you mean by that? What are you fellows doing out here?" said Bunce.

"Oh, you know what we're after. I want that diagram of the Aztec ruins."

"Diagram! What are you talking about?" growled Bunce.

"Produce," said Sam, in a threatening tone, "or we'll dump you both into the road."

"You must be crazy," said Phil.

"Look here, Bunce, we haven't followed you chaps for a matter of forty miles for the fun of the thing," said Jack. "Just hand over that diagram."

"I haven't got——"

"Do you want me to search you?"

"You'd better not!"

Jack grabbed him by the collar and pulled him off the mule by main force. Holding him firm, he thrust his hand into his inner pocket and pulled out the diagram.

"You see, your lying didn't do you any good," he said.

"We'll get square with you for this," said Bunce doggedly.

"For taking possession of my own property, eh?"

"It isn't your property. Phil and I found it."

"How did you find it? Through the letter one of you chaps stole out of my jacket when you took the two sovereigns out of our pockets. You are a nice pair of Americans, you are!" said Jack contemptuously.

"I suppose you're going to the ruins to get that treasure?" said Bunce.

"We are."

"You'll never get it. We'll follow you and put the Aztecs on you."

"We expected you'd do that, and we're going to prevent you."

"I'd like to see how you're going to do it."

"We're going to take both of you into that wood yonder, tie you to trees, and leave you. It's doubtful if you'll be found till the vultures have picked the flesh from your bones."

"Oh, I say, none of that! You wouldn't dare do such a thing."

"A man will dare anything with a million in sight. You stand between us and the Aztec treasure. You must be removed. That is all there is to it," said Jack to scare him.

"If you left us in that wood and we starved to death, it would be murder," said Sketchley, looking worried. "You wouldn't treat your friends that way."

"Friends! You've been fine friends to us, haven't you? We would have stood by you chaps through thick and thin if you had acted square by us. But it isn't in you. You are both sneaky and unreliable. You robbed us of the best part of our little money while you had twenty times as much yourselves, and you have tried to do us out of the secret of the Aztec ruins. You don't deserve any consideration at our hands."

"If you don't want anything more to do with us, let us go and we'll go back to Progreso," said Bunce. "We won't try to queer you with the treasure."

"You're not to be trusted. The simplest and most effectual way is to leave you in the wood. If you're alive when we get back we'll let you go; if you're not, we'll bury you."

Jack spoke as if he really meant to carry out that program, and the two guilty ones began to shake in their shoes, for they knew that Sam and Jack were strong enough to carry things their own way, and in that lonesome spot no one would hear their cries for help, or come to their aid in the wood. Sam said nothing. He knew Jack was only intimidating their ex-friends, and

that when he had frightened them enough he would let up on them.

"Oh, I say," began Bunce, "give us a show, won't you?"

"If I had the least confidence in you, I would, but as I haven't——"

"We'll swear to do the right thing."

"I know you will, and then you'll go back on your oath at the first chance."

"No; we'll stand by our word."

"It will be something new for you to do that. How much money have you?"

"Less than five dollars. We had over \$100 yesterday, but three robbers took it all away from us. I don't know what we're going to do after we get back to Progreso."

"So you're as bad off as that? Well, I'll take a risk with you. Maybe you'll act square if I make it to your interest. You can go along to the ruins with us. If we're fortunate enough to get into the treasure vault and get away with all the gold we can carry, you shall have a quarter of it between you."

"Do you mean that?" said Bunce eagerly.

"Yes."

"Then we'll agree. Yes, we'll take less than a quarter. We'll accept whatever you give us."

"The bargain is a quarter of all that's brought away. You don't deserve it, but we'll let you have it. If it's \$40,000, you fellows will get \$5,000 apiece. If it is more or less, you will profit in proportion; but you must put yourselves under my orders, and do exactly as I say. Do you agree to that?"

"Sure," said Bunce.

"And you, Sketchley?"

"I agree."

"All right. You have about \$5 between you. Sam and I haven't a whole lot more. We must make the money do somehow. Get our mules, Sam, and we'll go on."

Sam and Jack rode in advance, and an hour later they connected with a regular road at a point ten miles south of Bastia. The Aztec ruins lay sixty miles to the south. It would take them two days to reach them. At dark they reined up in front of an inn.

"We'll put up here for the night," said Jack.

He made arrangements with the proprietor, and in a short time they sat down to an appetizing supper. It was agreed that they were not to talk about the treasure except when they were alone on the road. If questioned about their business in that part of the country, they were to say that they were going to visit the Aztec ruins and no more. Phil knew it was their interest to stand in with them, and they were satisfied that a quarter of all the gold brought away ought to amount to enough to put them both on Easy Street. They knew in their hearts that they were not entitled to any of the gold.

"A quarter is a good deal to give those chaps," said Sam to Jack, after they had gone to bed.

"I'll make them earn it. They'll help carry half of what we get. In that way, if we're lucky, we can get away with twice as much as you and I could remove ourselves. Half of that we'll take from them and the balance they can divide between themselves, so you see if things turn out right we'll be gainers by having them along."

Jack didn't dream at that moment how much

service Phil and Jim were to render in the treasure hunt, now that they were broken to harness. The boys started on again after breakfast, and all that day traveled south, with occasional rests. At sundown they put up at another inn and stayed there all night. Next day was a repetition of the previous one, and when they reached the place where they were to stop for the night they were practically at their journey's end.

There was quite a village at this point, and a mile away, surrounded by fields of corn, fruit trees and other growing things, stood the Aztec ruins—a long, single-story stone structure, with a long stone platform in front, about four feet high, to reach which one ascended a wide set of steps, four of them. The boys could see the ruins in the moonlight as they sat outside the inn after supper.

"Which way does it face?" he asked the landlord.

"This way, senor."

Jack and Sam went to their room and studied the diagram carefully. The front of the ruins was indicated for a guide. How the main floor was arranged the boys could not guess. It did not interest them greatly. The steps leading to the vaults were shown in the southwest corner. It ended in the oblong passage, which, in the form of a parallelogram, encompassed the long sides and narrow ends of the building. The six vaults opened off this passage—three on either side.

The secret passage commenced at a point close to the northwest corner, ran southeast, then east to the secret seventh vault, which was situated at the extreme eastern end, between vaults three and four and the end passage. This was all the diagram explained. Had the late Mr. Sanderson investigated the secret vault more fully, he would have achieved more important results—results that would have been of great advantage to himself and which probably would have so altered matters that this story would not have been written. As it was, Jack and his companions were up against a difficult problem—how to remove a portion of the gold without discovery. To enter the secret passage it would, of course, be necessary to elude the vigilance of the Aztecs.

The fact that Sanderson had accomplished it was a sign that it could be done. Whatever was done would have to be pulled off in the daytime, for visitors were not permitted in the ruins after dark. Jack and Sam, now that they were on the scene, realized that they were up against a ticklish enterprise. If they succeeded in penetrating the secret vault, and were caught by the Aztecs making off with some of the treasure, the question was what would happen to them?

Would they be killed? It seemed likely that they would, or if not killed imprisoned somewhere in the ruins for the rest of their natural lives, since the Aztecs, if averse to shedding blood, would regard it as a matter of the first importance to prevent their secret from becoming known.

CHAPTER XII.—Conclusion.

Next morning after breakfast the four boys started for the ruins in a leisurely way. They intended to do a little scouting around first of all

to see how the land lay and how the Aztecs and their peon helpers were employed. The line of trees hid the lower part of the ruins from view until after they were passed. At length the long stone structure burst into view and the boys stopped and gazed upon it, as one of the greatest curiosities they had ever seen. Not a soul was to be seen on the platform or in the immediate vicinity. Out in the fields peons were working under the superintendence of one or more Aztecs.

The boys watched them for a while, and then continued their survey of the immediate approaches to the ruins. They were unable to go around the east end on account of a stream which ran close up to the lower wall. This stream was hidden by the rushes and bushes and trees growing on both banks clear down into the water. Retracing their steps, they got back to the front. "Now to go inside and trust to luck," said Jack.

They mounted the broad steps and stood on the great platform. Here they were walking upon stones that were reputed to have been laid in the time of the great Montezuma, over 400 years since. After all, 400 years isn't such a long time when you come to think of it. Nobody came to meet the boys and ask them what they wanted there. Jack, therefore, took the liberty of entering the ground floor, and his three companions followed. Their footsteps echoed on the stones, but attracted no attention.

"Follow me," said Jack, starting for the west end, where the steps were that led to the vaults.

They reached the stairs without being challenged, and descended into the cellar, as Jack called it. Here they expected to meet with some of the watchers, but there was no one there.

Jack led the way to the northwest corner, struck a match and looked the wall over, but it seemed to be perfectly solid, with not a sign of a door.

"I wonder if there is a concealed door here, or whether the diagram is a fake," said Sam, slapping the wall with his hand.

Instantly, as if in answer to the blow, a large rock fell away, revealing a narrow passage.

"You hit it right, Sam," said Jack eagerly. "Follow me. You last, Sam, and close the door, but don't shut it tight or we may not be able to get out. Put something in the crevice and hold it slightly ajar."

Jack led the way through the passage until he came at last to the seventh vault. All was dark there. Jack lighted a match and looked around. It was a square room, the walls of which were constructed in a peculiar way. They rose first to a height of four feet, then receded a foot and rose two feet, receded again, and rose two feet more, receded a third time and rose to the ceiling, thus forming a succession of solid shelves running all around the room. On these shelves were arranged fully 100 earthen pots, in shape like an old-time locomotive smokestack. Each pot was full of golden ingots of small size.

Mr. Sanderson had not exaggerated when he wrote that the gold he saw was worth a million. A bronze lamp full of oil on which floated a kind of wick hung from the ceiling. Jack lit it, and it gave out a dim illumination.

"We take a jar apiece and let it go at that,"

said Jack. "Now, then, grab one and come. We have no time to lose."

He seized the first at hand and started along the passage with it. Sam grabbed a second and followed him. Phil and Jim stood with mouths open, dazed by this display of gold. They hated to leave with only one beggarly pot.

"Let's fill our pockets and take two jars," said Phil.

Jim was only too willing. After each had distributed \$1,000 worth of golden ingots about his person, he picked up a jar and found it so heavy that to take two was clearly impossible.

"We can't take but one, and that's a load," said Bunce. "It's a shame to have to leave so much behind us. We must come back for more."

Off they started along the passage, but when they reached the door it was shut tight. They put down the pots and tried to open it, but they couldn't find the spring to save their lives.

"Good gracious, Phil, we're locked in! What shall we do?" cried Bunce, in a spasm of fright.

Phil made no reply. He was shivering from head to foot. And so the two boys stood there in the dark, completely panic-stricken. In the meanwhile Jack and Sam were hurrying along the passage, expecting the other two were following. They hastened up the steps.

"Leave your pot here and go out and see if the coast is clear," said Jack.

Sam did so, going as far as the next entrance to look in. Jack waited impatiently for him to return. He did not come and the leader of the expedition grew nervous at his delay.

Instead of leaving the pot he carried behind, he took it with him. When Jack came out of the main entrance with the pot of gold in his possession he saw Sam in the hands of two peons. He put down the pot and was about to go to his companion's assistance when half a dozen more peons rushed upon him. The odds were too great for him to face so he turned and fled down the steps. The pot was upset and rolled after him, striking the last step with a crash and going to pieces, deluging the stones with a shower of golden nuggets. At the same moment Sam tripped up the peons, broke away from them, sprang off the platform, and followed after Jack. They dashed for the eastern end of the building, forgetting about the stream which cut off their retreat. When they came upon it they stopped in dismay and looked behind. Half the peons were in full chase.

"We must take to the water and swim across," said Jack.

He sprang in, followed by Sam. Reaching the other side, they crawled into the rushes and hid themselves. They saw the peons poke their heads through the tall grass and look in the water. One of them pointed down the stream, and the bunch started off in that direction. In the meantime how did it fare with Phil and Jim?

"We must get the lamp and hunt for the spring," said Phil.

"You stay here and I'll fetch it," said Jim.

"I'll go with you. I don't want to stay in the dark alone," said Phil.

Leaving the two pots, they returned to the treasure room together. As Jim reached to take down the lamp Phil stopped him.

"Wait till I take down another pot," he said.

"What's the use? We can't take it away."

He grabbed the lamp, it slipped out of his fingers and fell to the floor with a smash and the oil and wick were dumped out, the light going out.

"Oh, gracious!" gurgled Phil. "Now you've done it. We're worse off than ever."

"We must feel our way back," said Jim.

"Wait till I catch hold of your jacket," said Phil.

Jim began feeling for the entrance to the passage. He was twisted up in the dark, and mistook the direction. There was a vacant space between the shelves opposite and he blundered into that, his hand striking the hard wall. The wall gave way before him, or in other words a door opened, and they passed through. They groped their way along for a few yards and then they saw the light of day shining through a thick mass of reeds.

In a moment or two they stood at the water's edge and at their feet was a boat with oars.

"Gee! What luck!" cried Jim. "We're all right now."

Not a sound reached their ears, but the soft eddying of the stream. They pushed the boat out and got in. At that moment Jack and Sam issued from the rushes on the other side. Jim saw them.

"Hello, fellows!" he shouted.

"Why, there's Sketchley and Bunce," said Sam, "and they've got a boat."

Bunce rowed across the narrow stream and they jumped into the boat.

"How came you to get there?" Jack asked Jim.

Bunce explained in a few words.

"So there's another exit from the treasure room, is there?" said Jack. "What a chance to get away with some of the gold! We were almost caught and we lost the two pots we took away. Row back to the hole you left, and Sam and I will see what can be done about getting half a dozen pots to the boat."

"Oh, fetch a dozen while you're about it," said Jim eagerly.

The boat was pushed back into the reeds and Jack and Sam saw the hole. Without losing any time they entered it and found their way to the treasure room. Sam remained at the door while Jack got a pot and handed it to him and then secured another himself. They soon brought them to the boat and handed them to Sketchley and Bunce. Then they went back for more. In this way they carried ten jars to the boat. That was as much as the craft would hold comfortably with themselves. So they pushed off and pulled up the stream, away from the ruins. They kept on till they had rowed a mile and saw the village in the distance.

"Bunce, you and Sam go to the inn and get the mules," said Jack.

The two boys hastened away, and returned inside of half an hour with a bunch of rope and the four mules. Two of the pots were lashed to each mule. That left two jars over. Sam and Jack unlashed their suitcases, dumped out their belongings, and stowed the rest of the nuggets in them. Then each leading his animal, they started for the road back to Bastia by a roundabout course that would take them clear of the village.

"Do you think it's safe for us to follow the road?" said Sam. "Those Aztecs are sure to

pursue us when they find out how much of the gold has been taken."

"We can keep on along the country, but we can't make as good time as we can by the road," replied Jack. "And the Aztecs and their peon allies are just as likely to spread out on both sides of the road as not. We've got to take our chances."

After getting the opinions of his three companions, Jack decided that it might be better to avoid the high road, and make their way the best they could across the country. They saw a house in the distance and pushed on there. It proved to be attached to a large plantation, the owner of which tendered them a hearty welcome when he found they were Americans, as his wife was a native of the States, and his two daughters were being educated at a seminary in New Orleans.

The boys told him their story, and showed him the gold.

He was greatly astonished, and sized the value of it up at \$100,000.

"It's a good thing you called here. You never would have got it to the coast the way you were carrying it. The Aztecs are probably hunting for you now, and would soon have overtaken you. I will have your gold crated up as I send produce to Progreso, and send it on by one by wagons, and one of you boys can go with the driver. Neither of the robbers, nor anybody else, will suspect it to be other than produce, which I am constantly sending to the coast, and it will not be interfered with. The rest of you lads will remain with me a few days and then go forward like ordinary travelers. In that way you and your gold will safely reach Progreso, and all will be well."

This arrangement was successfully carried out, Jack accompanying the gold, which reached Progreso safely and was stored as produce at the gentleman's storehouse.

Five days later the other boys joined them.

It was decided to ship it to New Orleans as produce just as it had been packed, and declare its true character to the customs officials on arrival.

"Phil and I get \$12,500 each, don't we?" said Bunce. "That was the agreement—a quarter to us two."

"I have decided to change the agreement and give you fellows a third instead of a quarter, as you have acted very decent since we joined hands."

"You're a brick," said Bunce, in a tone of satisfaction.

"You see it pays to act square," said Sam.

So when the boys reached New Orleans they sold the ingots, and turned the gold in at the mint. Jack got a check for \$120,000.

He and Sam divided \$80,000 between them, and Sketchley and Bunce received \$20,000 each, and so the race for gold turned out amicable in the end to the boys who had been after the Aztec treasure. He never saw the Mexican girl again, for she married another man, as he never returned to claim her.

Next week's issue will contain "TIPPED TO WIN; OR, THE WALL STREET MESSENGER WHO MADE A FORTUNE."

CURRENT NEWS

BEGINNING OF DISASTER ON MT. EVEREST.

Mount Everest has claimed her first victim, Dr. A. M. Kellas, a world-renowned explorer, dying of heart failure on June 5. The expedition can hardly expect to escape with this one fatality. Colonel Bury states that the vegetation and colored butterflies are wonderful. The party received the full benefit of the monsoon. A couple of minutes of the huge deluge was sufficient to penetrate any waterproof coverings. The mules which were depended upon for transport home collapsed miserably and horses had to be substituted.

GOLD FOUND IN ONTARIO.

A patented farm at Bourkes Sidings, Ottawa, Ont., has suddenly sprung into prominence. Gold in loose leaves as big as twenty-five cent pieces, has been discovered on the farm grounds, it is alleged, and local experts say that the find promises to become one of the most spectacular discoveries in northern Ontario.

Samples of the gold have been brought out and testers aver that the ore itself is of high grade type and occurs in a body about eight feet wide.

As yet there are no indications of any rush to the new Bonanza, probably on account of the farm being a patented one.

LAST OF WILD LANDS OPEN TO TRAVEL.

The wind River extension of the Rocky Mountain Highway, which was ceremoniously dedicated August 21, is said to open up to travel the last of the really wild lands of the United States.

The Rocky Mountain Highway runs from Denver to Lander and the Wild River extension carries it 200 miles farther through the "front door" to Yellowstone National Park. The total distance from Denver to the park is 589 miles.

The dedication took place at Twogwatee Pass, the highest point of the trail, 9,500 feet above sea level, where the traveler enters into the famous Jackson Hole country, where Tracy, the outlaw, some years ago led hundreds of deputies a merry chase in the dense forests and among the wild canyons.

TWO U. S. MUSKRATS START FUR MARKET FOR CZECHS,

American muskrats, a pair of them, carried into Czecho-Slovakia as curiosities twelve years ago, developed into wealth producers for the natives.

American Consul Breed at Prague informed Secretary Hoover the Czecho-Slovakians exported 50,000 muskrat fur skins last year.

Mr. Breed said the American muskrat, unknown to the natives before the tourists presented them as a curiosity, is now the basis of a thriving industry that is steadily growing. Many of the natives are entering the new business because it requires small capital and assures steady

and large profits. He reported an active demand for the fur of the muskrat from London and other buyers.

CHECKS BODY IN TRUNK.

Another "trunk" murder has been revealed in Paris. The slayer of Leon Baissiere, a concierge, near the St. Lazare railroad station, was arrested just as he was taking a blood stained trunk from the storage room with the assistance of two chauffeurs. They had promised to aid him in throwing the trunk into the Seine believing it contained only a shipment of meat that had been spoiled in transit.

Although at first the culprit insisted that he was acting for an unknown third person, he admitted that he was an ex-soldier named Felix, a nephew of the victim, whom he had slain in a quarrel after the uncle's refusal to lend him money until he could find work. Felix ransacked the house, finding 3,000 francs, which he spent with women acquaintances in a night of revelry after the body placed in the trunk had been checked at the station.

Felix signed a full confession and has been assigned to the same cell at Central Prison which seven months ago honored Hera Mirtel, the authoress, accused of killing her husband, M. Bessarabo, and despatching his dismembered body to Nancy in a trunk.

SWIMMER FAILS IN CHANNEL ATTEMPT.

Mrs. Arthur Hamilton again has failed in an attempt to swim the English Channel. She reports having left Cape Gris Nez, on the French side of the Channel near Calais, at 11 o'clock Saturday morning, and got within three miles of Deal, on the English side, Sunday morning, where she was compelled to abandon the swim. She says she was in the water twenty hours.

Mrs. Hamilton to-day expressed satisfaction at having accomplished what she claims to be a world's record for women swimmers, both as regards distance covered and time in the water.

Mrs. Hamilton, who is a daughter of Sir Charles Fairlie-Cunninghame, started last September from St. Margaret Bay, on the English shore, in an endeavor to swim to Cape Gris Nez. She was in the water at that time for twelve hours, and reported that she got within twelve miles of her objective. Sixteen years ago Annette Kellerman twice started on what was declared to have been attempts to swim the twenty-one miles across the Channel. In her first attempt she was said to have swam for five hours and in the second to have covered six miles. In each instance she was forced to quit through seasickness.

Captain Matthew Webb and T. W. Burgess are the only persons on record as having accomplished the task of swimming the Channel. Webb swam across in 1875 in 21 hours and 45 minutes, and Burgess in 1911 in 22 hours and 35 minutes.

A Lawyer At Nineteen

—OR—

FIGHTING AGAINST A FRAUD

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER XX.—(Continued.)

"Take this," he said, tossing the bottle down to the men standing on the ground, "and one of you come up here to help me carry him out through the window, and be sure that you make no noise."

He tiptoed back to the side of the bed, bent down, and lifted Lew up in his arms. It was evident that the man wore rubber shoes, for he made no sound as he crossed the floor with the unconscious young lawyer in his grasp. Reaching the window, he shoved Lew out feet first, and the man who had come up the ladder to help him took the still form from his arms and lowered it to the man who was standing on the ground.

Down came Morgan Drake, folded up the ladder, and led the way to the coach, the other two following and carrying Lew between them.

"All right, Bob," said Drake when Lew had been thrown upon the floor of the coach, and the vehicle was at once driven away.

Out through the streets of the town the coach was driven, and then along a country road that ran near a river that flowed through the city.

Limp and motionless, Lew Rand lay on the floor of the coach at the feet of his captors, while they chatted with one another.

Now, it happened that the young lawyer was one of those people who respond very quickly to the fumes of chloroform, and become unconscious with half the quantity that is required to render other persons insensible, and, naturally, the effect was not as lasting as it otherwise would have been. And so it came about that Lew slowly regained consciousness while the coach was going along a country road.

He felt dizzy and a little bit sick at the stomach, and for a moment was inclined to think that he had been taken sick in bed, but the bumping of the coach over the hard road made him understand that he was not in bed.

He was dazed, and he was also in darkness, save that light which could come through the coach windows from the stars, but he heard voices, and he lay still and tried to make out his surroundings and what was being said.

CHAPTER XXI.

Lew Rand Escapes From the Coach, But is Pursued By His Captors and Retaken.

Lew's senses cleared up a little, and then he heard what was being said:

"I suppose you feel happy now, Drake?"

"Of course I do. This fellow with the eagle eyes and his brains was more to be feared than the old chap, and now everything begins to look rosy."

"When will the case come up?"

"To-morrow or the next day."

"What's it good for?"

"Ten to twenty thousand."

Half-dazed as he was, Lew understood in whose company he was traveling and could think it out that he had been abducted from his home in some manner since he lay down on the bed. The smell and taste of chloroform which clung to him gave him a hint of what had happened, and he knew that he was being carried away to some place that would be his prison until the Winslow case was a thing of the past.

If he was to make any effort to escape from these men, to whom he was listening, it must be done speedily, and with that idea in his mind the young lawyer cautiously raised one hand and felt for the coach door.

The men were interested in the conversation they were carrying on, and as they did not doubt that the young lawyer was still unconscious from the drug that had been administered to him, they paid no attention whatever to him.

Taking advantage of this, Lew found the handle of the door, turned it, threw the door open, and then, not waiting to get upon his feet, a movement that would have given the men a chance to grasp him, he took a desperate chance and threw himself headlong from the vehicle.

In an instant he was sprawling in the road, but got upon his feet and ran as rapidly as he could away from the direction in which the coach was going.

"Stop, Bob!"

The coach came to a stop and the three men leaped out and ran after the young lawyer, who was doing his best to leave them behind, but his head was still dizzy from the effects of the chloroform and he was not able to even run in a straight line.

An extra wave of dizziness clouded his brain, and he staggered about from side to side. With rapid steps Morgan Drake, who was in advance of his men, ran up to the wavering young man.

Lew heard him coming, and with the instinct of the boxer, turned around and put up his hands, but he was half blinded with dizziness, and although he tried to block the blow that he saw coming he was unable to do so. Drake hit him and the plucky young fellow fell to the ground.

Up rushed the other two men.

"Quick, the bottle," said Drake, and it was handed to him. He at once began to spray it upon Lew as the latter lay in the road, and when the young lawyer tried to get upon his feet one of the men sat upon him, while Drake continued to use the chloroform.

When Lew came to his senses again he was conscious of a buzzing and ringing in his ears, and for a few minutes he could not imagine what had happened to him. Then he recalled his vain attempt to escape from his captors, and being knocked down in the road.

(To be continued.)

THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES

BURIED TREASURE IN OHIO.

"Buried treasure" was the goal of a dozen persons who scattered the earth near Venice, Ohio.

The quest was for a pot of gold, estimated to contain \$1,500, believed buried several years ago. Legend here is that the money was obtained from the sale of livestock by Michael Timberman. He returned with the money and buried it in the woods back of the house, according to the story. Michael became insane a few days later, and efforts of relatives and others since to locate the fortune have been fruitless.

HOW GUIANA INDIANS COUNT.

The Indians of Guiana have a curious system of enumeration, says the *Columbus Dispatch*. They count by the hand and its four fingers. Thus, when they reach five, instead of saying so, they call it a "hand." Six is therefore a "hand and first finger;" seven, a "hand and second finger." Ten is "two hands." But twenty, instead of being "four hands," is a "man." Forty is "two men," and thus they go on by twenties. Forty-six is expressed as "two men, a hand and first finger."

GOVERNMENT GUARDS PRIVATE FORESTS.

An agreement has been made by the Forest Service of the United States Department of Agriculture and a lumber company of California, by which the entire fire protection of about 800,000 acres of timberland owned by the company will be undertaken by the Government. The cost will be about \$12,000 a year. This means that every precaution known to the Forest Service both for preventing and fighting forest fire, will be used. Airplanes will patrol the timberlands and every forest ranger will be a fire warden.

INDIAN UNDERSTOOD SIGN.

Judge Charles Pollock, of El Paso, Tex., had to resort to the sign language and dismiss the case when trying a Navajo Indian on a charge of vagrancy.

The judge first spoke in English, then tried Spanish and finally Indian, Patrolman Tom Threepersons, of the Cherokee tribe acting as interpreter. The Indian shook his head each time, indicating that he did not understand.

At last the judge pointed to the door leading from the courtroom. The Navajo bowed his thanks and made a hasty exit.

HIS TORN BILL TIP BROUGHT RESULTS.

"Waiter, I'm going to be here for five or six days," said the keen business man from Chicago, as he sat down in the local restaurant.

Whereupon he removed from his wallet a crisp five-dollar bill and carefully tore it in half.

"This half you are to keep, and if you give me good service during my visit here I will deliver the other half of the bill to you just before I go away.

"Yassir," beamed the waiter.

And the keen business man from Chicago had no complaint to make about the excellent service he received at this restaurant during his stay in the metropolis.

The promise was fulfilled.

FIGS FLOURISH IN POOREST OF SOIL.

Consul Homer M. Byington of Naples writes that the production of figs for local consumption and for exportation is an important industry in Southern Italy. Fresh figs are a staple article of food, especially for the poorer classes, during the season, and when dried in the sun may be kept for considerable periods of time. Of peculiar economic value is the fact that they may be grown in soil too poor for other crops. The trees are planted irregularly and frequently on steep hillsides along small terraces.

In certain provinces it is the custom for land-owners to enter into an agreement with the farmer whereby the latter plants fig trees in the interior or waste portions of land, taking the entire crop for a stated number of years and at the end of the contract returning the land in producing condition.

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The Blue Dragon.

BY D. W. STEVENS.

Eleven centuries ago, where the city of Kamakura now stands, was a great lake, and down at the bottom of this lake lived a blue dragon, with emerald green eyes and a fiery mouth, who frightened the people to heart-sickness, because he lived on the flesh of little babies. He stole them whenever he could find them, cracked their bones, picked them clean, drank their blood and threw the dismembered skeletons on the shore of the lake, where weeping mothers in vain begged him to drown them also that they might forget their lost darlings' untimely fate.

Now, down by the lake lived Yoroti, a very rich man, who had sixteen children. He thought that even a dragon must respect so wealthy a person; and his wife could not persuade him to remove from the lake side.

"He gobbles up the peasants' babies, this ugly dragon," he used to say, "but he will not touch the offspring of a man of high position."

The event proved that he was wrong. One day he returned home to hear his wife wailing, and his servants beating their heads together. The blue dragon had killed and eaten all his little ones, and their bones strewed the shore of the lake. Completely crushed by this calamity, all his pride was gone. He gathered up the remains of his little ones and carried them away to a miserable desert place, covered with sand and unsheltered by a single tree. Here he buried them, and the peasants called the spot the Rich man's Burying Place. There he spent his time bewailing his loss; and he began to feel sorry for the peasants, whom heretofore he had despised, believing them to be clods, to whom such things happened because they did not feel them as more delicately bred persons would.

One day, while he was weeping and watering with his tears the sixteen cactus plants in the mounds beneath which he had laid the ashes of his children's bones, he heard a strange cry, and looking upward, saw a cormorant over him, that said:

"Rich man—rich man, are you sorry for the peasants now?"

And Yoroti bowed his head, and answered:

"Yes, I am sorry now."

Then the cormorant spoke again, and said:

"Rich man, would you save those peasant children if you could?"

And Yoroti answered:

"Yes—yes; I would save them if I could."

Then suddenly the cormorant changed into a beautiful winged woman and stood before him, and a strange light shone around her, and he fell on his face, afraid in her presence.

But she spoke to him kindly.

"Rich man," she said, "arise. If you would save the peasants' children, you can. Your wealth is great, and the blue dragon loves gold and jewels. Return to the lake side, dwell there with your wife, and on that day of the week on which the blue dragon comes for a child, go to him and offer in its stead a handful of gold or a jewel. Do this each week until all is gone, and so prove

your devotion to your fellow-sufferers. Meanwhile, for every tear of grief you save another I will shed one of gratitude to water the plants that grow over your children's graves."

Yoroti listened and obeyed. He kissed the pale-green plants and departed for his home.

His wife and servants were overjoyed to see him. When they heard his purpose, they marvelled, but no one attempted to interfere. They told him that the dragon had grown so bold that he entered homes and took a child from its mother's arms, and they saw him depart for the shore, on the first morning, with great terror, for no one could tell when this dragon might begin to eat men.

Yoroti stood at the lake side while the villagers watched him from afar, and his wife beat her hands together in terror, and the blue head of the dragon was lifted above the water, and the emerald eyes were fixed upon him. Then he spoke.

"Blue dragon, I come to speak to thee."

And the blue dragon answered:

"What do you wish?"

"I am a rich man, whose sixteen children thou hast eaten," said the rich man, "and I am come to offer thee a handful of gold for every child thou wilt spare. When the gold is gone I have jewels, emeralds, rubies, diamonds, pearls. Thou shalt have them all."

The dragon listened and consented.

"But remember," he said, "when I come to land I shall snort aloud three times. If the third time passes, and thou comest not, I shall take a child."

Yoroti agreed to this, but he knew the dragon's art, and that he hoped in this way to get gold and child-flesh too.

And now began a life of watching and fatigue. The dragon now came to the surface at least five times oftener than before. Even when he slept Yoroti always desired his wife to watch, and on the first snort of the dragon to awaken him; and he wore the fee the monster required for each child over his heart that there need be no delay.

That awful sound, as though the caves where evil things dwelt were burst open, aroused all the dwellers by the lake. They clasped their children to their hearts and trembled, but at the second cry they always saw Yoroti, the rich man, running from his home to the shore, and the blue dragon retired appeased to his lake again. And so it continued until all the money and jewels that Yoroti had possessed were gone but one great emerald. He could save one more child; no more.

The peasants by this time adored him. The priests prayed for him. His fame had spread far and wide. But, alas! his power would soon end. All were in despair. He stood on the shore, with the jewel in his palm, and he besought the dragon to take it and to leave the peasants henceforth in peace. The dragon only laughed.

"When I have snorted thrice, if I have not my fee, I will have a child," he said, and retreated to the lake.

The emerald caught the last glow of the setting sun as he sank beneath the water; and all was despair beside the Lake of the Dragon. On the other side of the lake was a mountain. Upon its hither side Yoroti went to bewail himself. And he prayed aloud, crying:

"Let me be taught how to save my poor peasants from the grief I have known."

And he heard a cry, and saw the cormorant hovering over the lake.

"Push the mountain into the lake," were the words it uttered.

"I cannot move the mountain," said Yoroti, sadly.

"Believe that you can and see," said the cormorant.

And Yoroti had faith, and extended his arms and pressed against the mountain side and cried:

"Drop into the lake, oh! mountain, and crush the dragon."

And the mountain moved slowly, and all saw it; and instantly it vanished into the lake. The water splashed all about, drenching everyone, and they fled; but when they recovered from their amazement, behold, the lake was filled up, and the dragon buried beneath the mountain forevermore; and a beautiful figure in white, with wings, stood by Yoroti's side, and said:

"Go, now, and take thy wife to the place they call the Rich Man's Burying Place, and see how I have watered thy plants."

Yoroti obeyed. Together the two sought the desert spot, and found that a little garden had sprung up there. Sixteen cactus plants, each bearing a great red flower, waved and nodded their heads toward them, and as they advanced the flowers burst open, and from each sprang the figure of a child—their own little children, as well and beautiful as ever, each bearing in the shawl it wore pearls and diamonds beyond price, and gold enough to make Yoroti a rich man again.

Then he returned to his place and was forever beloved by them and always happy. The blue temple was built upon the spot where the dragon's lake had been.

COINAGE OF DOLLARS AGAIN IN FULL BLAST.

Coinage of silver dollars has been resumed by the mint, after a lapse of seven years, and the work of replacing 279,000,000 standard silver dollars taken from the Treasury during the war to sell to Great Britain has been begun.

Since late in March, Treasury officials said, approximately 20,000,000 silver dollars have been coined. In the same period corresponding amounts of silver certificates were issued and Federal Reserve notes and Treasury certificates securing them retired. This process, officials said, probably would continue for five years, until the Treasury's reserve of silver dollars is back to its pre-war basis.

The mint, officials explained, ceased coining silver dollars in 1914, when the supply of metal purchased under the coinage act was exhausted. Further authority to make the dollars was not forthcoming until 1918, when Congress passed the Pittman act to enable the sale of melted dollars to England for the relief of the silver famine in India.

Under the terms of the act Director of the Mint Baker sold to England 279,000,000 silver dollars, amounting to 208,000,000 ounces of silver, at \$1.01½ an ounce plus the market price of the copper content in the dollar. The one and a half cents, Mr. Baker explained, paid for the cost

of melting and transportation and the cost of re-coinage.

The work of refilling the hole left in the Treasury's vaults, Mr. Baker said, was now well under way, the mint striking off silver dollars at the rate of about 8,000,000 to 10,000,000 a month.

In 1918, officials said, Great Britain's Mesopotamian campaign was threatened by a silver famine in India. Silver, India's monetary standard, was hoarded and hidden by the natives in the hills. The British Government, under war conditions, could not get the metal to keep up its silver reserve. German propaganda, seeking to drive a wedge between India and the empire and block England's plans in Mesopotamia, was spreading the report that the Government could not redeem its paper currency.

The British Ambassador laid his country's plight before this Government. Director of the Mint Baker suggested that the standard silver dollars lying idle in the Treasury could be used to meet the situation and the certificates outstanding against them replaced by Federal reserve notes. Prompt action was needed.

The Pittman act was passed in six days. Silver began to move from the sub-treasuries at once. The first shipments were not even molded. The dollars were rolled into little diamond shaped plates, and solid silver trains, guarded by secret service agents with sawed-off shotguns, were rushed to the ships waiting to take the metal to Europe.

TROPIC OASIS IN ALASKA.

Is there an oasis of tropical warmth in the Arctic region?

An expedition of scientists is now en route to explore the unknown country east, west and north of the Porcupine River in the Yukon Valley, where there is reason to believe that an astonishing oasis of warmth exists.

The belief comes from a discovery of a sudden and unexpected change in climate noted by C. J. McIntyre and two companions travelling north of the Porcupine by dog sledge last winter.

The thermometer that day was 40 degrees below zero, when it began to rise rapidly. The three men emerged suddenly from winter into spring, from icy snow to slushy mud.

In two hours' tramping they came to a hot spring, then others; the snow disappeared, and the stunted growth of an Arctic landscape was transformed to dense vegetation.

McIntyre believes that they were on the outskirts of a large region where the climate was warm, for he noticed that bear, caribou and moose abounded. He reported that one of the men claims to have seen a wild duck in one of the warm pools of water.

No one knows where the caribou go in winter. They slip out of sight during the long Arctic winter and are seen no more until March. If reports of this new region be true the explanation as to the winter quarters of caribou is evident.

The little expedition of three was not equipped to risk even a day's stop over to explore further, but will guide the scientists into the region this coming fall.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 16, 1921.

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

CROSSING U. S. ON HORSE.

A saddle horse as a means of transcontinental touring has not been entirely replaced by automobiles. Lewis E. Etter, 20 years old, a former student of the University of California, has started for Harrisburg, Pa., on a horse. Etter is said to be making the trip for the purpose of finding out first hand just what the early California pioneers experienced when they came West. Dodging automobiles is far more hazardous than dodging Indians, Etter said in a letter to W. W. Thomas, with whom he boarded in Berkeley.

SIXTEEN-INCH COAST-DEFENSE GUN.

In the shop tests of the new 16-inch barbette carriage for coast defense, recently completed at the Watertown Arsenal, the carriage functioned very satisfactorily. The load required on the slow-motion hand-wheel to traverse the piece was 17 pounds. It took 27 minutes, using man power, to elevate the gun from 0 degrees to 60 degrees. The electric traversing and elevating equipment had not as yet been assembled. One of the most difficult problems in designing the carriage was the control of the gun, which, with its recoil band, weighs about 200 tons. The gun will have an all-round fire and will throw a 2340-pound armor-piercing projectile to an extreme range of 55,000 yards. It can penetrate 14 inches of armor or more at all ranges up to its maximum.

THE TAX HURTS THE KIDS.

Millions of dollars are tied up in the playgrounds of this country and municipal athletics are going to be the biggest things in this land in years to come. Milwaukee at the present time has sixty baseball clubs playing in leagues, has more than twenty ball fields, with plenty of facilities for other indoor and outdoor sports, but great as these figures are there would be twice as many if the war tax was eliminated. Detroit has eighty-five ball clubs and twenty-five diamonds; Toledo has one hundred teams and twenty-one playgrounds, and Akron, Cleveland, Kansas City, and others who have gone into this idea

of development of athletics for the masses have hundreds of ball clubs, track teams, etc., but all of these would grow ten fold if the war tax was taken off athletic goods. It must come off and the only way it will come off is for the youth of this nation to continually bombard the representatives in Congress with letters.

Some few days ago the New Haven, Connecticut, park commission announced that a number of the baseball diamonds in the parks were not being used on Saturdays. This is the first time in a decade that every diamond has not been reserved for the season. Clubs do not care to play without uniforms. Uniforms to-day are lasting more than one season—but get the tax off and the New Haven Commission will not have to worry about the park diamonds being used.

If the tax is continued on athletic goods it is more than likely that a number of concerns manufacturing athletic goods will have to curtail its working forces and this won't make for the continued prosperity of the nation. The manufacturers of athletic goods make about \$12,000,000 worth of goods yearly, so this will give you an idea of the tax that is paid. The tax paid is nothing compared to the damage done.

LAUGHS

Judge—Prisoner, the jury has declared you guilty. Prisoner—Oh, that'll be all right, judge. You're a too intelligent man, I think, to be influenced by what they say.

"No, sir," said Peckham, "I won't accept that picture. It doesn't look like my wife at all." "Well, you ought to be thankful for that," replied the artist, "but some men are so easily pleased that it's difficult to please them."

"So you claim to possess the heart of a boy? Bah!" "But, really, I feel just as young as I ever did." "Go on. The fire engines went past here five minutes ago and you were so busy reading some of Emerson's essays that you never knew it."

"John," said the political leader's wife, "you'll have to get a new policeman assigned to this beat; Bridget doesn't like the present one." "All right," said he, "and while I'm about it, I'll get one that likes his meat rare. I'm getting tired of overdone beef."

"Hiram, what profession do you think our John ought to follow?" "I dunno," replied Farmer Kornkob. "John is rather handicapped. The only profession he thinks he is naturally adapted to is that of a capitalist, and I can't see where the money's coming from."

In a village in New Jersey the school mistress saw one of the little boys crying. She called him to her and inquired the reason. "Some of the big boys made me kiss a little girl out in the school-yard," was the reply. "Why, that is outrageous! Why did you not come right to me?" "I—I didn't know that you would let me kiss you," he said.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

WITHOUT ARMS OR LEGS.

Mrs. Ayers Stafford, of Crandall, Ga., who has been visiting at the home of her brother-in-law, Tom Stafford and family, has returned to her home.

Mrs. Stafford was accompanied on her visit by her little ten-months-old son. The little fellow has neither arms nor legs, but otherwise a normal child. The parents have received several flattering offers from different shows to put the little child on exhibition, but so far have refused all offers. Mrs. Stafford states that although poor and needing the money, she prefers not to get it in that way.

ATTACKED BY BABOONS.

Baboons are becoming a great menace to live stock and even to humans in the district known as Vergelegen in South Africa. Troops of as many as 300 baboons are reported as having been seen. A heavy drought has driven them out of the hills and into the cultivated districts. In one of these raids a pack of baboon dogs were turned loose and drove the baboons back into the mountains. A big male, according to Hamley's Menagerie Magazine, remained at the rear of the troop and acted as defender of the weaker ones. As the best dog in the pack attacked him the baboon leaped aside, gripped the dog around its middle and hurled it over a cliff some 50 feet below.

GONE IN SEARCH OF IVORY IN THE NORTH.

Genuine ivory, which in carved effects is held to be of such beauty and value as jewelry, is very scarce in the world's markets. The recent war is said to be the cause of the diminishing supply.

In peace times hundreds of men engaged in the ivory trade and hunted the world over to find the supply. Probably thirty men have outfitted in Seattle, Wash., this summer to go to the Yukon and Norton Sound tundras in search for the remains of mastodons and huge tusks that accompany the extinct mammals. A few years ago there was a regular trade for the ivory found in the floes of ice and glacier moraines in the region north of the Yukon River.

Much ivory also comes from the walrus and norwhal of Bering Sea and often a company of Eskimos is found who possess large quantities of tusks and teeth. A vast amount of ivory is held in Alaska as relics by men who have traded for it. Because of the record price being offered for it much will likely be brought back this fall.

SHIP HIT BY MOSQUITO CYCLONE.

A stiff breeze from the vicinity of Icy Straits, 150 miles away, brought such a cloud of mosquitoes as to overwhelm the crew and passengers of the steamship Spokane, while enroute from Skagway to Seattle. The storm which assumed the whirling motion of a cyclone evidently picked up millions of the insects from bogs and carried them seaward. Striking the Spokane the mosquitoes covered everything. The glass of the pilot house was imbedded so thickly with the

crawling insects as to make seeing impossible. The inside became a living mass of fighting mosquitoes driving out the first mate. The captain lighted a newspaper and smudged out the pests.

All passengers were driven inside the cabins and fought for their breath amid the whirling mass of tiny creatures. For ten minutes the storm seemed to center its efforts and results on the Spokane and continued to deposit the mosquitoes on the ship. They lay scattered over the deck in drifts and myriads of them were blown down into the funnels of the ventilators so that the crew below had a taste of the pests.

A black bear tied forward so suffered from the cruel attacks of the chilled and hungry insects that he leaped overboard and was hanged to death by his collar and chain.

As soon as the wind subsided the insects quit coming and the hose was turned on to wash the decks clear of the dead and dying. Capt. Walaby brought a pickle bottle filled with the mosquitoes to port. He scooped them up with a spoon from his compass and sextant in the pilot house.

WALKS FROM LOS ANGELES IN 88 DAYS.

The Bronx, New York, had an old home celebration the other afternoon when relatives and friends of twenty-one-year-old John Lush dropped in at No. 1423 Franklin Avenue to welcome him from an eighty-eight-day hike from Los Angeles. They were rewarded by the sight of the most profuse mop of red hair and the most complete set of facial herbage ever raised by a mere youngster. The pedestrian grew the flora because it was part of the wager he made before he began the hike.

He said he had bet he could walk from the Pacific to the Atlantic in four months, eating nothing but raw food on the way and subsisting entirely on his daily earnings. He won by one month and two days. He walked from forty to forty-five miles most days and carried a forty-pound pack.

One pair of shoes sufficed for the trip, although they were resoled three times and required twenty-two sets of hob nails. The eyelets were in perfect condition at the finish. Asked how he managed to keep a supply of fresh raw food, the walker said he had purchased nuts and vegetables wherever he found them in abundance and sent them by parcel post to the cities he expected to make in the next few days.

"Get any rides?" he was asked.

"Well, it was this way," he replied. "I was bound by the wager to walk, but I did test the hospitality of Americans by checking the number of cars that passed me. I found that 15 per cent. of the drivers will try to give a fellow a lift. Eighty-five per cent. step on the gas—they are so kind-hearted they hate to bother you with their dust, I suppose."

Lush looked none the worse for the experience and said that he had lost only nine pounds en route. He credited raw food for his excellent condition.

THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES

FISH IN YARD.

Frank Moses, an orchardist, of Cashmere, Wash., says the fish are coming right into his front yard this summer. One Sunday morning as he was starting for church he heard a flopping noise in an open irrigation ditch between two rows of apple trees and searched for the cause.

It was an eight-pound salmon struggling to keep its head under water. A little distance up the orchard he found another, about a pound heavier, and all the way to the feed gate there were large salmon ploughing their way in the ditches. There is a screen across the mouth of the irrigation canal to prevent fish from entering the laterals. This gate is ten feet high, so that in getting over the salmon had to make a ten-foot leap.

A DWARF BEAR.

Charles Wyers of Husum, Wash., shot an animal said to be a dwarf desert bear. The creature weighed but twenty-five pounds, was full grown and in appearance similar to the brown bear of the Cascade Mountains except that it possessed a smaller neck and a larger stomach.

It was killed along the road toward White Salmon. The dwarf bear was scared out of a clump of sage brush. The curious animal was but twenty inches long and was believed to be a cub until on examination it was found to have hard paws and worn teeth. Old hunters declare it must be at least five years old.

It had a burrow in the sand, the opening of which was in the midst of the clump of sage. Its last meal had been three ground squirrels. The specimen was immediately despatched to the State Museum in Seattle. Old hunters declare the Indians frequently told of baby bears living in the sand dunes, but none was ever seen before.

TO SELL INSURANCE FOR GOLF ACCIDENTS.

Golf liability insurance is to be written by at least two of the big Hartford insurance companies, according to an insurance official, who said recently that already the Hartford Accident and Indemnity Insurance Company and the Aetna Life Insurance Company had issued some of the golf insurance policies.

With golf becoming increasingly popular and the courses more and more crowded, there are many more chances of a player injuring or killing another player or a spectator. Even caddies, good, bad and indifferent, are underwritten against injuries, provided they were accidentally inflicted. The Hartford is to issue a policy covering the assured against loss of life or injury to himself, liability from injury or death of another, and the destruction by fire of golf equipment up to \$50. Death and liability are covered up to as high of \$5,000, loss of both eyes, \$5,000, and loss of one eye, \$2,000.

The Aetna Life policy consists of a rider attached to its general liability policy, specifying that the provisions of the policy apply solely to

liabilities encountered in playing golf, and for an additional premium, the policy holder may secure coverage up to \$10,000 for accidents in which more than one person is injured.

BARGES FORM GANG PLANKS FOR WISE OLD RODENTS.

Harbor officials exercise great care along the New York water front to keep rats from gaining the shore via the mooring lines without passing quarantine inspection. As the only way rodents on incoming vessels can pass inspection is to die, it is natural that those with leanings toward life ashore take advantage of opportunities offered by careless barge captains to smuggle themselves to terra firma.

It is not unusual to see big liners of the well-known transportation companies carefully moored, a rat guard on every hawser and sufficient distance between the ship's side and dock to discourage any athletic rat, with a fleet of barges on the other side touching the ship and extending clear across to the next dock, thus affording a direct route ashore for all rats that care to land.

Rats, as any mariner knows, are wise beyond their years, the master of a harbor tug observed recently in discussing the rat problem. It never seems to occur to the health inspectors that when the rats can't get ashore via the ropes the next best thing is to drop into a barge alongside and be ferried to some distant or nearby dock where getting to land requires no hazard other than climbing to the nearest cap log.

THE SCREWDRIVER MUST FIT THE SCREW.

What do you know about your screwdriver? This is the tool that is used more often than any other, but it is a safe bet that few amateur mechanics know all the facts stated by Harry D. Livers, plant superintendent of the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company for Kansas, in a series of questions in the Southwestern Telephone News (St. Louis), as follows:

"Do you know that the screws, from the smallest to the largest sizes, most commonly used in our work have only three sizes of slots?"

"Do you know that these screws require three different sizes of screwdrivers?"

"Do you know that slots in screws are rectangular in shape? Do you know that screwdrivers should be filed to fit the screw slots?"

"Do you know that if driver fits the screw slots you will not break screw heads off? This prevents waste."

"Do you know that if driver fits screw slot the danger of driver slipping is reduced to a minimum, preventing accident?"

"Do you know that if driver fits the screw slots and you simply turn the driver, and no pressure is necessary, you will not upset your ladder? This is Safety First."

"Have you the proper number of drivers in your tool-kit? Are the drivers properly shaped?"

DEVELOPMENT OF PALESTINE

Rapid progress is being made in developing Palestine under British Government for the Holy Land is now governed under a mandate. There are 600,000 inhabitants of whom only 100,000 are Jews. The Turks did everything possible during the war to ruin the country. Palestine is a very small country, and an agricultural one resembling in topography Spain or Southern Italy. There is much waste land which will be reclaimed by irrigation. It is believed that a second California can be created. Palestine now exports barley, oranges, olives, olive oil and wines. There are two growing seasons in the year, and the soil when irrigated is most productive. Near Jaffa there are 1,000 acres of vineyards. Almonds are grown there and wonderful oranges and grapefruit. The colonists are just beginning to develop the fruit growing possibilities, but to-day throughout Palestine one can see the terraced hill-sides that made the whole country a garden 2,000 years ago, and it will not be difficult to make the country a garden again.

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Photo when bald.

"At a time when I had become discouraged at trying various hair lotions, tonics, specialists' treatments, etc., I came across, in my travels, a Cherokee Indian 'medicine man' who had an elixir that he asseverated would grow my hair. Although I had but little faith, I gave it a trial. To my amazement a light fuzz soon appeared. It developed, day by day, into a healthy growth, and ere long my hair was as prolific as in my youthful days.

That I was astonished and happy is expressing my state of mind mildly. Obviously, the hair roots had not been dead, but were dormant in the scalp, awaiting the fertilizing potency of the mysterious pomade. I negotiated for and came into possession of the principle for preparing this mysterious elixir, now called Kotalko, and later had the recipe put into practical form by a chemist.

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How YOU May Grow YOUR Hair

It has been proved in very many cases that hair roots did not die even when the hair fell out through dandruff, fever, alopecia areata or certain other hair or scalp disorders. Miss A. D. Otto reports: "About 8 years ago my hair began to fall out until my scalp in spots was almost entirely bald. I used everything that was recommended but was always disappointed until at last I came across Kotalko. My bald spots are being covered now; the growth is already about three inches." G. W. Mitchell reports: "I had spots completely bald, over which hair is now growing since I used Kotalko." Mrs. Matilda Maxwell reports: "The whole front of my head was as bald as the palm of my hand for about 15 years. Since using Kotalko, hair is growing all over the place that was bald." Many more splendid, convincing reports from satisfied users.

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BALDNESS, DANDRUFF

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After hair growth



Kotalko is wonderful for women's hair.

THE MEANEST MAN.

A Turkish story runs, according to the Buffalo Commercial, that, dying, a pious man bequeathed to his son, charging him to give \$100 to the meanest man he could find and \$100 to the most foolish. The most foolish man is another story. As to the meanest, accounts agree that a certain cadi filled the bill. Accordingly the dutiful son offered him \$100. "But I can't take your \$100," said the cadi. "I never knew your father. There was no reason why he should leave me the money." "It's yours all right," persisted the mourning youth. "I might take it in a pretended transaction," said the cadi, relenting. "Suppose—I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll sell you all that snow in the courtyard for \$100." The young man agreed, willing to be quit of his trust on any terms. Next day he was arrested, taken before the cadi and ordered to remove his snow at once. As this was a command the young man was utterly unable to execute, he was fined \$20 by the cadi for his disobedience. "At least," the young man said sorrowfully as he left the court, "father's \$100 went to the right man."

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